MONTANYE

W·O·Stoddard·

Ralph P. Stoddard,

from his father.

Madison, New Jersey,

Christmas, 1903.

William O. Stoddard

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MONTANYE

OR

The Slavers of Old New York

BY

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

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MONTANYE

OR

THE SLAVERS OF OLD NEW YORK

CHAPTER I.

THE RED SLAVE.

"OLD Pequot catch 'em all in harbor, last night. Make fire by hole in ice."

There were two lots of fish of several kinds and sizes. A considerable heap of them lay upon a rude sled, outside the Montanye gate, while the other lot, strung upon a twig, was held up for the inspection of a pair of pretty blue eyes.

"They are fine," said the owner of the blue eyes. "You are a good fisherman, Sassago. Who are those others for, out there?"

"Gen'l Howe," he responded gruffly. "Hab

to make him t'ink old Pequot a red coat and gib him paper to fish all roun' island."

"Humph!" she exclaimed, angrily. "Red coats! They are going away soon. O! how I wish they were all gone."

The beady black eyes of the elderly red man flashed fire and he looked at her even more admiringly than before, but he did not at once make any remarks. He was broad rather than tall and there was in his movements the kind of ease which accompanies great muscular strength.

As for her, she could yet have reached her twentieth year and she was of only medium height, but her present air and attitude of resentment made her seem taller. Perhaps not all of the high color in her cheeks was due to the frosty air of the winter morning.

The Montanye place was apparently well kept. An ample, two-story frame dwelling, indeed, might not indicate wealth. Either Madeline Montanye had spent too much money on her furs, for the times, or there was a successful trapper in the family. The otterskin hood from under which a few of her brown curls were fluttering, was such as a countess might have envied. The mink skins with which her pelisse was trimmed were elegant and the cloth was of fine quality.

Most New York City girls had little money to dress with in the year 1783. Ever since 1776 it had been a garrison town, occupied by the troops of King George III. Manhattan Island, from end to end, was seamed with entrenchments and dotted with camps. There were black spots, too, that were military prisons and among the ships at anchor in the harbor there were prison hulks which were floating hells.

The sunrise gun at Fort George, at the southerly end of the island had not awakened, that morning, more than half as many New Yorkers as it might have done in the years before the war, for the population had diminished from over 20,000 to about 10,000.

It was an hour, now, since that solitary reverberation had traveled northward over the snow and ice and there had been time for all early risers to get their breakfast.

Madeline glanced contemptuously at the fish on the sled, as if she half despised them for being on their way to a British army mess, but at that moment the red man's quick ears called away his eyes from the face of his mistress.

"One red coat come now," he exclaimed. "Foot lobster, one cabberly, too, 'way down yonder. No talk to 'em. Old Pequot want to 'calp 'em all. Ebery one ob 'em debbil!"

The expression with which he said that did not go away, but remained upon his face as if it belonged there. It was barely more than half blanketed by the subservient grin with which he turned to greet a burly Briton in full regimentals. The soldier carried not only his musket with bayonet fixed, to show that he was on duty, but also an arrogant swagger of military authority. Moreover, it pleased him to be pleased with the face of Miss Montanye and to stare into it with impudent approval while he good humoredly sent out a half kick to Sassago and remarked:

"Fish, eh? Take 'em to our mess. I'll carry this fellow, myself."

He picked up a superb bass from the top of the heap on the sled.

"No! No! Lobster no take 'em! Put down!" sprung angrily from the lips of Sassago.

The red coat stared at him in utter astonishment. This, to a representative of the British army? Impossible!

"Put it down?" he echoed, in a savage growl, to which was added a bit of blasphemy and a hideous epithet.

Madeline did not seem to hear it, but her face was changed from red to white, and Sassago was laughing. It was a low, queer, unmusical laugh,

for the soldier had lifted his musket as if he were about to strike a blow with the butt of it. Moreover, the right hand of the red man had flashed inside his buckskin hunting shirt and was griping hard upon something. Perhaps his untamed grandfather might, at times, have gripped the hilt of a scalping knife with very much that kind of glitter in his eyes.

"No! No!" he said again. "Old Pequot take fish to Gen'l Howe. Soger no 'teal 'em!"

The name of General Howe was a large club with which to threaten a private soldier, but the clubbed musket would have made at least one angry hit, if it had not been for Madeline. She sprang out between the two and clutched the uplifted weapon, exclaiming:

"Don't you dare to strike him! He is mine!"

Sassago's knife was still hidden by the buckskins, but it was out of the sheath. Something more serious might have occurred, the next instant, however, but for the opportune arrival of what the Indian had described as "cabberly."

The rider who had drawn his rein so sharply, close to them, wore the brilliant uniform of a staff-major.

"Halt, there, you dog!" he shouted, "Back! you villain! Miss Montanye, what is this?"

"O! Major Bedford! Why, you know Sassago. He belongs to me. He caught the fish for General Howe, last night. The General expects them—"

"Why, certainly!" responded the Major, staring down at her with undisguised admiration. "Your servant must not be harmed. Put down that fish, my man. Go to your quarters. You will hear from me about this."

The soldier had lowered his musket, stepping back a pace, rigidly erect, awaiting orders in all the woodenish subservience which belongs to perfect drill and discipline, and he marched away like a machine set in motion.

Boom! Boom! came at that moment from the southward, as if one heavy gun spoke first and another answered it. The thunderous reports came unexpectedly and the group at the Montanye gate stood still to listen. Even the Major's horse turned his head as if he might wish an explanation of that cannonading.

Boom! Boom! Boom! It came again.

"That's it," exclaimed the Major. "There's a heavy ship just come in. Miss Montanye, there will be news this time. You may be sure of that. I must call and pay my respects some other time. Sassago, your pile of fish must go right

along. The General's mess steward will need every fin of them."

With a sweeping bow to Madeline he was gone, for his horse bounded away at the sound of another gun.

The soldier had turned in his tracks at a little distance to glare angrily at Sassago and even at Madeline.

"I'll take fish from any nigger," he muttered, "or from any she rebel. I'll fix that chap, too, if he doesn't supply our mess."

"Sassago," his mistress was saying to him, "hurry along to the general's. Get the news. Father will be anxious to hear it. Come back as soon as you can."

"More big gun," replied Sassago. S'pose big ship come? Red coat lie a heap."

He may have referred to the established character of army and navy bulletins, but he had keenly scrutinized the face of Major Bedford and he re-arranged a small affair under his hunting shirt while he remarked to himself:

"No hab him come to Montanye place. Old Pequot 'calp him, some day."

As for Miss Montanye, the expression of her face as she walked to the house was quite in keeping with her thoughts.

"Coming to pay his respects? He? I must treat them all politely, father says. I almost wish Major Bedford knew how glad I would be to see the British army marching out and the Continentals marching in, with General Washington at their head."

The love of liberty, the hatred of oppression might thrive exceedingly well under such circumstances as hers. She said, aloud, that her years since childhood had been so many prison years in the middle of that great camp.

"We are nothing but slaves," she said. "I hate the very thought of it!"

Nevertheless, every other human being under that roof, red, yellow, or black, was the slave of her own father, the Rev. Peter Montanye, D. D., scholar, theologian and supposed to be an uncommonly loyal supporter of the throne and crown of King George of England.

CHAPTER II.

FAR AWAY AT SEA.

HUNDREDS of miles away southerly and easterly from the good port of New York, that January morning, there had been four vessels lying becalmed. Three of them were grouped not far from each other, each hidden from its neighbors by the darkness before the dawn and by a gray fog which brooded over the long, sluggish rolls of the Atlantic ocean. The air was cool, but not chilly, in that latitude, and the sea itself seemed waiting for wind to come before it could get up from its blanketed slumber.

One of these vessels was a three-master of about 600 tons. Another, a size smaller, was a bark. The third, a large trim-looking schooner, lay a half mile south of the three-master, covered by the fog.

More than twice that distance southeastward the fourth vessel rose and fell upon the unrippling billows. She, too, was a schooner and her lines seemed to indicate that she had been constructed for speed rather than carrying capacity. She was by no means a small craft, however, and she was

at this hour floating no flag to tell her nationality. There were closed ports on her sides and these were pierced through bulwarks of unusual thickness. Behind each port lay sleeping on its carriage a long-nine gun. A yet longer eighteen-pounder rested upon a swivel amidships while the well-made racks at the foot of each mast were packed armories of miscellaneous weapons.

She was provided with a preposterously numerous crew, if those now on deck represented as many more below, and they were of so many different nationalities that they offered no suggestion of the colors under which they were sailing. They were an unpleasant lot to look upon. A large proportion of them wore haggard, cadaverous faces, such as men may wear after long continued excesses, or when some serious illness is either getting hold of them or letting go. Among them were absolutely hideous faces, sun-bronzed, seamed, scarred, ferociously animal rather than human.

The after hatch was open and there came up through it a kind of steam-like sickening odor. One going down that hatchway might have discovered a between-decks cut up by bulk-heads into several compartments. The larger of these, well aft, was under the odorous opening in the

deck, and with the rank smell went up also snarls like the snarls of wild beasts and a sort of monotonous chanting in a tongue that was certainly not European.

It was dark in the between-decks, in spite of a lantern that swung near the hatchway, but the light of that dull watcher fell upon the face of the chanter. Scores of other faces turned toward him, listening, and all of them were like his, as black as night. Several pairs of hands were at that moment uplifted and held out, as if in imitation of his own, which he was raising to exhibit them in the lantern light. Excepting these, which might be a dozen in number, all the black wrists in that company wore manacles, while those which were uplifted were unaccountably free. Short, hoarse laughs, with a sound of terrible exultation in them, now chimed in with the guttural cadencies of his barbaric singing. Then from out the darkness and the steaming horror of the remaining area of the between-decks came the clank of fetters and the roar of many voices which had in them hate and suffering and madness. It was all an untellable, unendurable place, a cave of death and hell in the middle of the morning sea.

Upon the after deck of the schooner there was a sort of cabin, so constructed that it might also

serve as a fort in case of need. Its door was open and a little inside of it swung a hammock. Beside this as the dawn came and the fog lifted, stood a swarthy seaman belted with pistols and cutlass, speaking to a large-framed man who was lying in the hammock.

"Senor Araga?" he said inquiringly.

"Well?" came peevishly from a pair of feverish lips and a pallid face was uplifted.

"A good wind is coming, I think. There are three sails in sight to leeward."

"What have we to do with them? We have run risks enough," growled the sick man. "Let them go, Moreno."

"Senor Captain," replied Moreno, speaking in Spanish, as did the other, "the men will not allow it. Nothing can hold them back from making prizes."

"Go on, then. What do I care?" said Captain Araga faintly. "Only you all know how it is. No witnesses are to be left, just now."

"Witnesses?" laughed Moreno. "When did we leave any in the wake of the *Leon?* I never left any, anywhere, and Jose Moreno's log is a long one."

"Heave ahead, wolf," responded Captain Araga as his next in command left the cabin.

He sank back in the hammock and was silent a moment as if thinking.

"Let them do as they will," he then muttered in English. "I have no share in this affair, at least. I must get ashore and get well, though. This is my last venture. I shall have enough cash, I think, on board and at Havana, to buy back the old estate and spend the rest of my days like a gentleman—Hullo! Again? Already? We must be nearing them. Moreno is a prime good hand for his trade."

Even while he had been muttering, a rattle of tackle and a shout from the crew, as the *Leon* went about, had been followed by the deep-throated roar of the eighteen-pounder pivot gun. Captain Araga turned over in his hammock and listened intently, propping his head with one hand and seeming to be in pain.

"No! No!" he exclaimed. "No witnesses. My papers are all right, but there is no safety for me until I and my money are in England. The secret will keep there. This is an exciting life, but I am weary of it. They are firing again!"

The second report of the long gun was followed by cheers from the crew and by Moreno's voice shouting:

"We hit her, this time, boys! Down comes

her flag! Up with ours! She has surrendered. All hands away to board her. We must make quick work of her and we must finish both of the others before noon. It's our luck, this time."

Cheer after cheer responded and the *Leon* swept gaily on toward her prizes.

CHAPTER III.

PEACE AND YET NO PEACE.

THE soldier who had given his name to Major Bedford as Cropper, had marched down the road which led to the city, or rather to as much of it as had been left by the fire of 1776 and the fire of 1778. The burned districts, from Trinity church down and across the island, had been partly rebuilt, but there was yet a wide vacancy. Most of the wealthier inhabitants had fled in the Summer of 1776, before Manhattan became either a battlefield or a British camp. Many loyalists who then remained were preparing to emigrate, now, with others who from time to time had come in from the interior of the country. The old-time foreign commerce and inland trade had been cut off by the war, of course, but New York had continued to be a prosperous seaport. The British cruisers and privateers had brought in large numbers of prizes, to be here adjudged and sold, with their cargoes. Much money was to be gained in this connection, while the large expenditures of the British army and navy afforded opportunities for profits of all

sorts, especially to merchants on good terms with quartermasters, commissaries and naval supply agents. Nevertheless the great mass of the remaining population was somewhat restricted in its means for obtaining a livelihood and the cost of living was unpleasantly high.

On the whole, it was a miserable place for unmilitary families to live in, even when they were like the Montanye family, which seemed always to have enough without pretending to have more.

The clergyman was a good man, and learned, and never since the war began had he been known to exhibit more than a sovereign or so at a time and a little silver.

He had been born comparatively poor on Manhattan Island, and he had left it when a very young man, to complete his studies in Europe. He had been middle aged when, in 1773, he had returned, with high testimonials both scholarly and ecclesiastical, to buy part of the land and some of the slaves of a decayed branch of the old Montanye family. He also brought with him a wife, an invalid, soon to pass away, and a little daughter. Madeline was not yet ten years old at that time, and now it seemed as if New York had always been her home. Three years later General Washington's army lost the battle of Long

Island. Since that day she had passed tremendously long, irritating seasons, one after another, within sight of British camps and forts and uniforms and within hearing of British saluting guns.

She was now standing on the piazza of the mansion, with a look of intense bitterness upon her face.

"Poor Sassago!" she exclaimed. "He refused to obey them at first. How they did flog him.. I don't believe there's a slave on the place, if there is on the island, that they have not flogged, at one time or another. But Sassago himself doesn't hate them as much as Nanny does."

A large, very black woman had walked past her and returned. Her face was not uncomely, but for its heavy, sullen expression and a sort of smoldering fire in her deeply set eyes. She was a strong woman, for she had picked up the heavy string of fish left by Sassago and she held it easily out at arm's length to inspect it.

"Bes' kind!" she said, with something like a smile that showed her white teeth. "I's glad he didn't hit Sassago. Dot ole Indian kin take care of heself, but dey mus'n't any red coat lay a hand on Miss Madeline."

The long, keen carving knife in her other hand was there, no doubt, with reference to the cleaning

of fish, but the motion she was making with it was not aimed at any of them. It seemed rather to turn its point in the direction which had been taken by Major Bedford and private Cropper—both now out of range.

The salute firing in the harbor had ceased but, something like an hour later, the old Pequot Sassago learned as much as he might of its meaning from a brace of dignified gentlemen in uniform, not far from General Howe's quarters.

"That is all there is of it thus far, General. The preliminary peace was signed at Paris, the last day in November. Nobody knows when or where any real lasting peace will be signed. There isn't anything worth firing for, as yet."

"I understand that, Admiral," said his companion. "All things must remain as they are for months, or longer. Washington's army may freeze and rot in his camp up the Hudson. Our own may rust away, uselessly, here in New York. Oh! How I wish I were back in Old England! No, sir; this is to be neither war nor peace. On the whole, I think you navymen have the best of it, for you can go to sea and we can't."

"That's so," laughed the admiral, "and there is a point to make right there. All the ocean swarms with Yankee privateers and they have

done our commerce incalculable injury. I am inclined to believe that from this time on we shall treat those fellows as pirates."

"That's what they are," exclaimed the General. "Catch them and hang them! Privateers! Pirates! So are most of our own, by the way. Not any better. Every man of them ought to be hung."

"I don't know about that," grumbled the Admiral slowly. "I do believe, though, that the world would be better off if privateering were abolished."

"The Yankee privateers were about all the navy they had," returned the General, "and I must say they have done an immense amount of effective cruising."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEVENTH FLAG.

THERE were two men pacing slowly up and down the deck of the first schooner, becalmed in the fog that morning. They wore somewhat sombre faces and they cast many glances at the fog and toward their useless sails.

Several gruff remarks which they were making disclosed the fact that the stalwart, iron-gray haired man on the right was Captain Mark Wilton, from New York, commander of the American privateer *Montauk*, and that the handsome, dashing looking young sailor at his side was Richard Wilton, his son and also next in command of the trim cruiser.

Furthermore it appeared that the two vessels nearest them in the mist were prizes of their own taking. The bark was a Bristol craft, with cargo and passengers for New York, and the three-master was a London trader which was on her way to the West Indies when the *Montauk* overhauled her and changed her destination.

"It is getting lighter, Dick," said the Captain, at last. "The worst part of our home run,

though, will be from this to the capes of the Delaware."

"We could make it alone, easy," said Dick. "The prizes are our deck load of danger. I almost wish we hadn't taken them."

"We shall get there, prizes and all," responded his father, but he said it thoughtfully, and he added: "There will be peace between the colonies and Great Britain, pretty soon. You and I can get back to New York, then. O! How I want to see your mother! God bless her! I suppose she is at the Montanye place yet, if she is alive. She will hardly know you, Dick."

The young man must indeed have grown and changed during the long years of the war, all of which appeared to have been spent at sea by himself and his father. Other matters, mostly nautical, were briefly discussed and then the Captain remarked:

"I suppose that little Montanye girl is a grown-up woman now. I always thought she would make a good-looking one, too—"

Just then a voice forward sang out:

"Cap'in Wilton, I can sight the Bristol bark, The Lunnoner's all right, too. Hurrah for a wind!"

"Sam Green's a prime good lookout," said

Dick. "I'm glad he hasn't seen anything else, though. We are short-handed for a fight, with so many of our best men away in prizes. Those out yonder weakened us badly."

"They are ours anyway, peace or no peace," exclaimed his father with some energy. "We saw American ships captured in the British Channel after we left Antwerp. That was nigh a year after Cornwallis surrendered. They haven't stopped taking prizes, and we needn't stop till they do."

"We won't, either," said Dick, "but I wish we hadn't so much of our own property on board. It would be safer with those Dutch bankers in Amsterdam."

"We shall need all we have to set up again in New York, if peace is ever to come," replied his father.

Sam Green was lowering a telescope from his keen gray eyes and he called out:

"Prizes all right, Cap'in Wilton. The fog's a liftin' and a breeze is comin', but I've sighted another sail coming with it."

"Signal both of ours to keep away," shouted back the Captain. "We'll keep the *Montauk* between them and any stranger."

They were on dangerous cruising ground.

They were homeward bound, carrying with them in cargo and otherwise a large part of the fruits of their career as privateers and it was well to be wary of strange sails.

There were only five flags of much importance then upon the American part of the Atlantic ocean. Those of Spain, France and Portugal were friendly. The colonial Pine Tree flag now fluttered from the rigging of the *Montauk*. What her Captain and crew dreaded was the red cross flag of England, carried by some cruiser with guns to heavy for them to contend with. Their craft had been constructed, strongly, for the whale fishery. She was staunch enough and reasonably fast. One long, thirty-two pounder amidships, however, and eight sixes, four on a side, were all the guns she could carry. They had made her an efficient privateer and she had been fitted up to take on men enough to handle her and also to spare crews for prizes.

Just now, lest she should look warlike at the wrong time, her ports had been closed and a tarpaulin covered the pivot gun. She might have seemed, to a casual observer, the most peaceful of merchantmen. In that character, to tell the truth, Captain Mark Wilton had sailed her within hailing distance of more than one unsuspecting

trader. It was but the customary hypocrisy of the legalized buccaneering that was carried on by all nations under the disguise of "letters of marque and reprisal."

The fog lifted and floated away.

The Bristol bark and the London ship were first to feel the light wind which came and were spreading all sail to take advantage of it. The *Montauk* also was beginning to show canvas but did not appear to be in any hurry. She was lazy, considering that she still had over thirty prime seamen to handle her. She steadily fell astern of her prizes as the strange sail to windward drew near.

"Sam," said the Captain to Mate Green, "that schooner is coming right for us. Tell the men to lie low, out of sight. I want to find out what that fellow's made of. I don't like his motions."

Sam had been at work with his telescope and was shutting his jaws a little tightly.

"Father," said Dick Wilton, after giving needed directions to the crew, "she's a shark!"

"No cruiser, I'd say," replied the Captain. "But she's a clipper to go and she has the wind of us. Sometimes they don't recognize the old pine tree as any flag at all. There is just one

bunting more that we can raise over the *Montauk*. Green!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"That chap is within range, now. Run up the new flag!"

"Ready, now, sir! Hullo!—There it comes!"

Even as he spoke, a white cloud arose upon the deck of the strange schooner. There was a streaming red flash in the cloud. Then a shot came hurtling over the *Montauk*, followed by the report of a heavy gun. It was a peremptory summons to surrender.

"Lie low, all," shouted Captain Wilton. "Steady, for a minute. There go the prizes, all right. Now for it!"

The men in charge of the prizes were sending up sail after sail to catch the now freshening breeze, but not another rag was raised upon the *Montauk*. It looked as if her skipper had already given up his case as hopeless, and now a second shot from the stranger went through his mainsail.

"Close work," muttered Captain Wilton, but he instantly exclaimed, loudly: "Green! Dick! See that? I thought so. Haul down the Pine Tree! I'll teach 'em!"

The old New England banner under which so

many daring deeds had been done, was coming down as if the *Montauk* intended making no defense and, at the same moment another flag, the sixth of any importance in those seas, shot swiftly up to its place above the rigging of the approaching pirate. It was as black as ink and in the middle of it, ghastly white, appeared a grinning skull and crossbones.

Sam Green's face, as he stood beside the Captain, wore a drawn and desperate look, while that of the Captain himself was as if he had suddenly been changed into chilled iron. Dick had gone swiftly to the helm, with directions from his father, and there was no sign of panic upon his bronzed, resolute face.

"Cap'in," said Green, "if they board us, we're gone. We must keep 'em off. They'd cut every throat on board. I want to see Sally Green again, I do."

"Sam," said the Captain, "she is faster'n we are. She's to the win'ard, too. Likely enough she carries heavier guns. Let 'em come down as if they were to have it all their own way. But, Sam! Fill every gun to the lips with grape and canister! Quick, now!"

Sam was at it instantly, and so were others. Even a lot of old nails went into the maws of the

Montauk's artillery. Sam crawled under the tarpaulin to feed the pivot gun without uncovering it and as he crawled out he grimly remarked:

"That'll do! That there piccaroon is lower in the water than we are. We'll just sweep her decks. Most likely she has four or five men to our one."

It was not quite so bad as that, even as to numbers, and considerable allowance was also to be made for the character and fighting condition of the respective crews. The sailors of the *Montauk* were mostly tough and brawny New England coast men. So many of them, however, were old whalers that the boarding pikes now being served out to them below were nothing in the world but whaling lances, keen as razors, in the use of which, to hold or to throw, they were experts. Pistols and cutlasses and knives they had also, of course, but the lances had a terribly effective appearance. Nearer, nearer, swept the swift and jaunty buccaneer, with its black flag of "no quarter" telling upon what errand it was coming. She was not firing her guns, for her helpless victim had seemingly surrendered, but her deck swarmed with men, clustering most thickly amidships in their ferocious eagerness to be first on board the *Montauk* when the *Leon* should reach and grapple her.

There had been jabbering of many tongues on board the *Leon*, but there was silence now, while mate Moreno was giving his final instructions.

"We must make short work of her," he said. "We will take her and finish her crew. Then we will go on after the others and come back to plunder this one. It is our lucky day. They have had their crews pressed out of them and they are short-handed. No fight left in them, and they think we may show mercy on them if they give up at once."

That was a fair translation of his Spanish and the crew read the matter very much as he did while they loosened their cutlasses and knives and chuckled hideously to each other concerning the butcher work they were about to do.

Captain Araga, of the *Leon*, fever-bound in his hammock, was kept informed by Moreno of the pleasant aspect of affairs.

"Pine Tree Flag?" he had scornfully remarked. "Yankee rebels! Clean them up, Moreno. Finish and scuttle and burn. I am glad they surrendered, though. Yankees can fight. The fools! To give it up and walk the plank. Hullo! Ho! What's that? What does it mean?"

The gun whose tremendous detonation came to his ears had not been fired on board the *Leon*. Upon her deck, however, arose the chorus of shrieks and curses that followed. Something like a dull echo of them surged up through the open after hatch with the bad air from the between-decks.

The *Montauk* had been drawing harmlessly nearer until, for some reason, she seemed to yaw a little. Then four ports on her larboard side flew open and the black muzzles of guns ran out. They did not speak at once but the tarpaulin slipped from over the long thirty-two-pounder amidships.

"Now!" shouted Captain Wilton. "Give it to 'em and run up the flag!"

The pivot gun hurled its messengers of death among the clustered wolves of the sea on the deck of the *Leon*, sweeping them down by the dozen. The Stars and Stripes of the young American Republic flashed up to the masthead, while the sailors of the *Montauk* hailed, with cheer after cheer, the seventh flag, the emblem of peace and freedom, before which the skull and crossbones blazon was yet to disappear entirely from the face of the ocean.

CHAPTER V.

SLAVES IN NEW YORK.

MADELINE MONTANYE was in the kitchen of her somewhat plainly furnished but exceedingly comfortable dwelling. It was well that such a house should have a first-rate kitchen, moreover, for Dr. Montanye was given to hospitality. On the other hand, officers of the British army and navy were disposed to kindly feelings toward a table where the wines were so good and where the host appeared to have especial facilities for obtaining fish and game. His political opinions, too, were supposed to be correct, and those of his daughter had thus far been kept under a kind of suppression. She had an abundance of them, nevertheless, and she was expressing some of them vigorously.

"Slaves?" she said. "That's what we all are till the British get away. I hate slavery. No human being ought to be one. I don't want any. I'll never have any. Think of my owning you, Nanny! You are as much a woman as I am."

"Bress de Lord!" exclaimed the dark-faced cook. "Doesn't ye s'pose Nanny knows jest

w'ot she is? She knows w'ot you is, too, an' she jes lubs ye. It ain't no kin' of slabe to lib wid you."

"I won't have it!" cried Madeline again. "Its wicked."

"Ye can't jes' help it," responded Nanny, her countenance growing all but sunny as she looked at the young mistress. "I guess your father knowed w'ot he was 'bout w'en he bought de Montanye brack people. He could jes' take good keer ob 'em t'rough de wah time. You keep still, Miss Madeline. De red coats is goin' soon."

"Yes," said Madeline slowly, "that is just what he did. I am going to have a talk with him about it."

"My daughter," came at that moment from a doorway leading into the hall, "I wish I knew the meaning of those guns."

"Why, father," she said, "Sassago promised to bring back all the news."

"I can't wait," he replied, nervously. "Besides I think Mr. Kruger can tell me more than Sassago can find out. H'm!—Madeline, I was at the window when that unpleasant affair—Ahem! Yes, I was coming if I had been needed. You did right to protect your own servant, but I

must say one thing positively. I do not wish you to become very well acquainted with Major Bedford."

"Father," she exclaimed sharply. "I don't like him! I don't like his face!"

"Don't!" he said dryly. "We can't prevent staff officers from calling and we are bound to be civil to them. You will know how to meet any of them."

"I know how I do not wish to meet any of them, if I can help it," she said. "I shall be glad when they all sail away."

He made no direct reply to that, as he turned away through the hall, but his head was bowed and he was muttering:

"Peace? Peace? Can there be any real peace? I never knew any. I think I never shall. Ah me! There is always some kind of murder going on. I believe the greater part of the human race is descended from Cain."

The Rev. Peter Montanye was ever an elegantly appearing man, in his faultless clerical garb and with his stern, erect, almost haughty bearing. His face had relaxed, lovingly, while he was speaking to his daughter, but it had at once hardened again. He was evidently not a man to be trifled with, by his slaves or anybody

else, but if he had any heats of temper or any other emotional weaknesses he was probably able to control or conceal them. He seemed to be in vigorous health, with plenty of bone, muscle and sinew. He must have heard a part, at least, of Madeline's explosion relating to freedom, for he remarked, as he strode away:

"Slaves, indeed? What does a woman know about such matters? We shall need millions of them after the war is over. We must have abundance of laborers to build up this great and beautiful country of ours. We shall need them right here to rebuild this half ruined city of New York. The future inheritance of the black race is not in Africa but America. It is really the only hope the poor, fetish-worshipping heathen have for ever becoming Christianized."

Whatever he may have meant by that, the best attainable records of the transportation service between the shore of Africa and that of America sustain the assertion that a good half of the black candidates for Christianity and civilization were fed out to the sharks by the way.

Probably the peculiar feature of the good work he was contemplating was not uppermost in the mind of the philanthropic clergyman and the general subject of profitable bond servants was

busying the thoughts of other men also. He went on horseback to the city and he may have reached it even before Sassago had delivered his sled load of fish at the quarters of General Howe.

Much news had already reached the shore at all events. Some of it was ready for Dr. Montanye when he dismounted in front of the building occupied by his friend Kruger for his commercial establishment, one square below Wall street, near the East river wharves. The clergyman walked through to the counting-room in the rear and an elderly man who arose to greet him exclaimed:

"Doctor! Glad to see you! We must discuss this peace news—"

"It has come?" inquired the doctor.

"Something that looks like it," said Mr. Kruger hopefully. "Only a half a peace, as yet, but half is better than nothing and the rest will follow."

There were rapid explanations and then Dr. Montanye remarked:

"Friend Kruger, one thing is certain. Whenever peace is established, our first requirement for prosperity will be a large supply of labor."

"All Africa is right over yonder," said Mr. Kruger. "Millions of laborers doing nothing for themselves or anybody else. Nearly all the

cargoes of them, though, just before the war, went to the southern colonies. We shall need them here now. I mean to have at least one ship ready for that business."

"Do so, by all means," said Dr. Montanye. "The public good requires it. Some of our most successful merchants obtained the greater part of their fortunes in the African trade, in the earlier days of this colony."

"My own father did," said Mr. Kruger. He went in his own ship about the year 1700. He kept a diary, too. I've read it. Some of the children of the savages he brought over are altogether civilized to-day. It was a benefit to them more than to others."

"I remember him," said Dr. Montanye. "He was an alderman of the Dock ward when I was a little fellow. He was one of the best of men. By the way, Kruger, please give me gold for that. You are about the only man I care to show it to."

It was a Bank of England note for fifty pounds and it would account, until expended, for the fact that the good man had a little money in his pocket.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIGHT ON THE "LEON."

EVENTS which are closely related to each other may take place hundreds of miles apart just as well as if they occurred in adjoining dooryards. No matter how far away might be the *Montauk* upon the Atlantic ocean, the farm once occupied by Captain Mark Wilton was still the next piece of land southward of the Montanye estate.

When, in 1776, Putnam's column of defeated Continentals marched out of New York by the King's bridge road, to escape from the victorious British, Captain Wilton had found it wise to go with them somewhat hastily. His only son, Richard, went with him, out of the freshman class of Columbia college. It had been a bitter disappointment for Dick, although he was as fierce a rebel as his father. He had, indeed been a schoolmate and warm admirer of one Alexander Hamilton, a young fellow who had organized a company of artillery which was largely composed of forty-one school boys older than young Wilton. The latter would have joined Aleck if he had been old

enough and he hardly felt reconciled as to that matter until, a few days later, he sailed out of the port of New London in the staunch whaler *Montauk*, refitted as a privateer.

Captain Wilton himself felt more at home on the sea than at his now lost mercantile concern on Beaver street, and his son was just the boy to make a good sailor of.

The years since then which had brought Madeline Montanye into young womanhood, had changed Richard into a seasoned and capable seaman of twenty-three. In one respect the two families were even nearer than before, for the British knocked away the Wilton homestead and put a small fort upon the site of it, while the Wilton fields became a camp and a parade ground. Then, when Mrs. Montanye died, her friend and neighbor, Mrs. Wilton, already under the roof as a fugitive, remained there as a guardian of Madeline's girlhood, with a strong tendency to talk about the sea and its perils, and her brave husband and her sailor boy, from whom she could so seldom obtain any tidings.

Mrs. Wilton sat in her room and thought about them this very morning and Madeline talked with Nanny, and all the while both father and son were facing more than the ordinary perils of the sea.

The ruse of the *Montauk* had been a complete success, but one destructive grist of shot was not enough for victory in a fight for life and death on both sides.

The guns of the *Leon* had not even been manned, so sure were all of her crew of an easy victim and so eager were they all to serve as boarders. Before they could at all recover from their first astonishment and dismay, however, the *Montauk* swung around and a second broadside hurled ruin among them. Then, as the two schooners came swiftly together and grapplings were thrown, Captain Wilton shouted to his men :

" Board ! Board ! Kill ! Every man fight for his own throat !"

Less than thirty stalwart privateersmen could be spared from the *Montauk*, but they went over the pirate's bulwark in a compact body. Even now, reduced nearly one-half in killed and wounded as were the buccaneers, the advantage in numbers was still dangerously with them. They were all veteran sea fighters, accustomed to sudden changes, desperate straits, and to fighting with ropes around their necks.

Araga, in his hammock, was tossing and shouting and cursing fiendishly, while Mate Mo-

reno was showing himself a good leader, giving his orders rapidly and coolly encouraging his crew.

"We are two to one," he shouted. "Cut them down! Keep together! Down with them!"

A stroke of Sam Green's whale lance came like a stroke of lightning, and he would lead no more, while, at that very moment, a yell that was inarticulate, frightful, came up through the after hatchway.

After the firing of the first gun not one pirate had been left below. There were therefore no white watchers of the black cargo there confined, and the Coromantee who had been chanting so wierdly sprang to his feet and listened. The second gun sounded and he was peering through the hatchway while behind him came, stepping stealthily like panthers, the other blacks whose hands and feet were now free. A brace of them were also at work severing more rope fetters from other limbs but such as were of iron were too much for them just then. All seemed to stagger a little at first, for it had been long since they had had free use of their muscles. Minutes passed and then they appeared to understand the meaning of the *Montauk's* destructive broadsides. The confused uproar of the boarding followed and now

the black barbarians were on deck searching wildly for weapons.

Handspikes, clubs, axes, pikes and even a few cutlasses from the dead and wounded were at hand, and the buccaneers who were closing with such desperation around the Wiltons and their men drew back with sudden shudders as they heard the Coromantee war cry behind them.

"The slaves are up! The slaves are up! We are lost!" they shouted frantically, for the last horror of the slave trade had come upon them.

The *Montauk's* crew were pressing vigorously the foes in front of them while the larger part of the buccaneers turned to face the black men. Down went the latter rapidly, killing and being killed, but the pirates forward were now outnumbered in their turn. The end came very speedily and through the last tumult rang the hoarse voice of Sam Green:

"Finish 'em, boys! Finish 'em! Kill every one of 'em. It's only jist shark and wolf spearin'!"

"This is awful business," was what Dick Wilton was saying to himself. "I won't do any more of it than I can help. But where did those niggers come from? They fight like so many devils! I guess they saved us."

They could do no more. The pirates had turned upon them as they did in a vague, awful dread lest more of those dark shapes were coming up from the pit of their misery. There were not many free to come. Those who had been so had killed a number of their enemies, but they had no fire-arms, they were enfeebled by their prison life and they were dealt with by expert swordsmen. All they could expect, therefore, was to fight and die but, as the last of them went down, the deck of the *Leon* was cleared of all who had faced the American privateers and the whale lances charged aft. All through the fight the buccaneers seemed to be lacking in physical strength and Sam Green remarked as he leaned over and looked down the after hatchway:

"Phew! I wonder they had any life left in 'em after smellin' this pisen."

There may have been a kind of justice in the fact that the black victims, dying by inches in filth and fever, had prepared their oppressors before hand for the swift vengeance which now had fallen upon them from the hands of both white men and colored.

Captain Wilton, cutting down a yellow-faced Portuguese who faced him for a moment at the cabin door, stepped over him as he lay and

looked in. It was an awful face that stared back at him—that of Captain Araga, rocking back and forth as he strained with all his remaining energy to sit up in his hammock.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Who are you?" roared the Captain.

"Moreno!" yelled Araga. "Men! Jose! Santos! Ferrara! Ho! Ah, here—my pistols? Moreno! Where are they?"

"All dead, I guess," replied the Captain. "Drop that pistol. Where are your logbook and papers? You are the captain of this infernal piccaroon!"

"Papers? Never!" gasped Araga. "You won't get them. O, yes, Yankee! I'm the captain. I'm on my return voyage. I am going home to England. Old estates there. Moreno? Galicia? Take this fellow out and make him walk the plank! Ho-ho! My logbook, indeed! Papers! Did you say you desired to inspect my papers? They are in good shape. All regular."

"The devil is out of his head," said Captain Wilton quietly. "I'll take away his weapons, now, and I'll come and rummage bye and bye. I must see to the black fellows. There may be more danger there."

The feeble hand of Araga let go of the pistol,

and he lay back, panting, despairing, in the half madness of his fever and his excitement, dimly aware of ruin.

Captain Wilton's cutlass was in his hand when he stepped out of the cabin, but there was no longer any need for it.

"Dick," he shouted, "how is the muster roll?"

"Better'n you'd guess," called back Dick. "I thought we were all going till the slaves made their rush. Only three killed and five wounded, not to speak of scratches. Did you get a cut?"

"Not one," replied the captain.

"Mine is only a graze of a bullet," said Dick. "It doesn't lay me up."

The names of the severely hurt and of the dead were given and the captain said:

"I'm glad it's no worse, I must say. We will bury all at once. The wounded must be put on board the *Montauk* and we'll cast loose from her. You will take her and just men enough to work her. I shall need all the rest to clean up this craft and look out for the niggers."

"All right," said Dick. "Both ships are unhurt. I'll go on after the prizes. They may think we've been taken."

"Likely as not," grumbled the captain. "I'll

make sail and follow. The captain of this sea wolf is sick in the cabin, but I'll make out to find his papers. Heave ahead, Dick. I say, Green, how about wounded pirates?"

"I guess there ain't any," growled Sam, as he wound a handkerchief over a cut on his left arm. "There are plenty of sharks alongside, though. They always know enough to follow a slaver. They didn't foller for nothin' this time."

Dick selected his men for the *Montauk*, the wounded men were put on board of her and the grapplings were cast off. She was free of the *Leon*. Her sails were going up again and, as she slipped buoyantly away an exclamation from one of his crew made Dick look up.

From the mast of the *Montauk* floated the starry banner, the most beautiful flag on earth, that was to become yet more beautiful as the years to come should pass.

From the slaver-pirate the black flag with its ominous skull and bones, was fluttering swiftly down while another was going up in its place.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Dick, "Father hasn't even taken the Pine Tree on that craft. It's the old 'Don't Tread on Me' rattlesnake flag that we sailed from New London with in 1776. Its a pretty good flag, but it's out of date. Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes!"

He said it so loudly that his crew heard and deemed it a summons. Even the wounded men joined as well as they could in the hearty response which came. Then the three cheers from the *Montauk* were answered vigorously from the *Leon*. She was no longer a pirate, a destroyer, but was she not still a slaver?

Decidedly, then, a rattlesnake flag was more appropriate for her rigging than the banner of human brotherhood and freedom.

CHAPTER VII.

DARK HISTORY.

MADELINE MONTANYE lingered in the kitchen after her father had gone on his news-seeking errand to the city. She, too, was eager for news of almost any kind. She was wishing that he or Sassago or both of them might bring back to her an abundance of fresh information concerning the doings of the great world outside of the harbor of New York. She was vaguely aware that a great deal must be going on, all over the earth, but was continually in the dark as to the nature of it.

By common consent, although not by any means officially, the war had been regarded as ended by the surrender of General Lord Cornwallis, October 13, 1781. The British army, however, under General Guy Carleton, and the British fleet under Admiral Digby, held New York as firmly as ever. There was very little relaxation in the strictness with which "martial law" was enforced. Hardly at any time had there been a larger British force camped upon Manhattan island, for troops had now been drawn

there from other places. Many of these were exchanged prisoners of war, and, on the other hand, the prison ships and "church prisons" did not now contain American prisoners.

General Washington's headquarters were at Newburg on the Hudson With him, and in other American camps, here and there, the army with which he had won the freedom of the United States was shivering, dying, half clad, half starving, resentful, almost mutinous, among its tents and cabins.

Much information concerning this had drifted in through the lines and there was also a general knowledge, a little threadbare with long expectation and disappointment, that the British Ministry and the American Congress were patching together the difficult articles and agreements of a formal peace. Whenever that should be completely manufactured and delivered, all men believed that good times would surely come.

Even such a young woman as Madeline, therefore, could feel a deeper interest than usual in the outside world and its possible tidings. What if her father and Sassago were now receiving information that the longed for end had come? It was like a dream. It might be so. It might not. What else might come? She even listened

vainly for the sound of another gun, but none came.

"Miss Madeline," inquired Nanny, "if the red coats is clean beat up, w'y doesn't Gen'l Washin'ton march in wid his men? I jus' wish he would an' kill 'em all! Dey jes' need killin', I say!"

"If he will only hurry them out of New York, I will be satisfied," exclaimed Madeline. "I feel as if we were slaves until they go!"

"Tell ye w'ot, Miss Madeline," said Nanny. "Dey has treated w'ite rebels a heap wuss dan dey has black ones. De British has killed t'ousans' an' t'ousans' ob de w'ites dat broke loose from 'em. Now, I tell yo' w'en the black folks riz, in de ole times, bout de year 1741—I was a chile, den—dey put 'em down, but dey didn't sen' any ob 'em to de prison-ships. My uncle, he was flog to def, an' my father, dey chain him up and starve him to def, jes' like he'd been one ob dese yere Continentals. Dey burned nine ob dem on de common, but dar dey stopped, an' dey didn't do any moah 'cept a heap o' floggin'."

Nanny's recollections and comparisons conveyed a somewhat peculiar lesson. Her own sullen face grew darker and her black eyes burned with a fiercer fire, but her speech was all but mo-

notonous, unexcited, while Madeline broke out furiously:

"Oh, Nanny, how cruel! What right has any man to make another man work for him without pay? Or to whip him, or shoot him, or hang him, or burn him for refusing to work? Every man and woman has a born right to freedom!"

"Dat won't do, Miss Madeline," responded Nanny. "Some folks is born black. I's one of 'em, only I isn't 'zackly a slabe. I's one ob de Montanyes an' I jes' hate de red coats."

"Don't you let father hear you say so," exclaimed Madeline. It isn't—"

"Don't I w'ot?" interrupted Nanny, as if in great astonishment. "Did you say I mus' keep my mouf shet in dis house? Oh, dat's it, is it? I mus' look out sharp for a w'ile. I jes' tell ye, do', you isn't half de rebbil your father is. If you doesn't know de hull story, I'll tell you all 'bout it w'en de wah is ober."

The negro dialect spoken upon Manhattan Island was not always easy to follow. Large numbers of those who spoke it had been compelled to acquire it with the help of their Dutch masters or neighbors. Nanny herself came nearer to good English than if she had been born in some other household. Blacks who had been

born in America did better, all around, of course, than direct importations from Africa. There was one thing about Nanny, however, that needed no interpreter and that was the language of her face. It was dark with hate for red coats and it was bright with love for her mistress. The latter affection seemed also to blend with a curious phase of American patriotism, as if the triumph of the United States armies had in it something of promise of her own future and that of her race.

Madeline now turned suddenly and walked away without speaking again. She even went up stairs in silence, and it was not until she had closed behind her the door of her own room that she exclaimed:

"What? My father is a worse rebel than I am? What does Nanny mean? How could she know? If he trusts her, could he not trust me, too? I will find out about this! Mrs. Wilton is a rebel. Does she know more than I do? Her husband and her son have been fighting the British all these years. Now, I have a right to be angry. Father ought not to leave concealed such a thing from me. I am only a girl, am I? Well! I guess I could keep a secret as well as Nanny could, or Sassago, or Mrs. Wilton!"

She was not yet entirely sure, but if her

father had indeed shown any lack of confidence in his daughter, he had thereby stung her painfully. Her next thoughts went back to the beginning of the British occupation.

"That is so," she said to herself. "I was only a little girl, then. I am a woman, now, anyhow, and I am going to make him treat me like one. Right away!"

Her expression of feeling was somewhat natural, and so, perhaps, was the cloud, which gathered upon the face of Rev. Dr. Peter Montanye as he sat in the counting room of his friend Mr. Kruger. He was listening to something like a statement of account of certain enterprises in which they appeared to have joint interests.

"The fact is," said Mr. Kruger, "that if anything is really left over it will be months yet before we can receive any remittances. It may be a dead loss, for all we know. We have to trust all to the honesty of our correspondents."

"Let us trust, then, that they are honest," replied Dr. Montanye. "Let us go back to the other matter, for a moment. We have now in this colony—I mean in this State of New York—about as many slaves, red and black, as we had in 1776. There were, say, 10,000 then, and I suppose there is little increase, so many have run

away. As for obtaining any more, Indians are out of the question. No Mohawks for me! Our only hope is a supply from Africa—"

"Fudge!" exclaimed Mr. Kruger. "I have searched out that matter. I can tell you that not another cargo of Africans will ever be landed in New York. I don't believe there ever will in any other State of the American Union. We don't need to land any here, with all the West Indies and South America for an unlimited market. What we are to employ here is white labor, and just how we are to get it, I don't know. I am opposed to shipping in upon us European paupers and convicts. They are an unmitigated evil—Meantime, Doctor, that must go to General Washington."

"I will send it to Newburg, at once," replied Dr. Montanye, taking the parcel held out to him. "I think Sassago can safely set out this very evening."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOG OF CAPTAIN ARAGA.

THE *Montauk* swept away and Richard Wilton, now in command of her, stood upon her deck considering the unexpected situation in which the startling events of the day had placed him.

There was a shot hole in the schooner's mainsail but her hull and spars were uninjured and the sail could be tailored whole again.

"I have seven able-bodied men," Dick was thinking. "Five that are wounded. Some of them will be up pretty soon. I guess I can take a man or two out of each of the prizes, but I must catch up with them first. I can navigate the *Montauk* into Baltimore if the British will let me alone. Father is going to have his hands full. He knows better than I do how to get along with a black cargo. Nobody will ever ask for an account of the piccaroons."

Whatever his opinion of that matter was worth, the *Montauk* raced on, full sail, after the bark and the three-master, both already well down to leeward.

It had been sorely against the will of some of the brave American sailors on board those two vessels to sail away from such a fight as they saw the *Montauk* go into. They had their orders, however, and their first duty was to escape, for their glasses had correctly informed them of the character of the *Leon.* They knew, too, at this hour, that the pirates and their comrades had fought it out hand to hand and they were as yet ignorant of the result. There were beating hearts among them and, at the same time, the women passengers of the prizes found themselves disposed to pray most sincerely for the very Yankee privateers who had captured them. These were now their only protection against death or worse than death at the hands of the dreaded scourges of the sea.

"They will run their best," said Dick to the seaman who was now acting as his first mate. "We can catch them, though."

"I shouldn't wonder if they're a pretty badly skeered lot, cap'n," laughingly replied the mate. "They don't know but what the old *Montauk's* been took and turned into a buccaneer."

There was enough to do on board of her, at all events, but it was all as nothing compared to the job that was on the hands of Captain Mark

Wilton and his men. It was well that there were so many of them. During the first few minutes after casting off from the *Montauk*, there had been dismal work, indeed, on the *Leon*. There had been a casting of lifeless human forms into the waves alongside and a scurry among many hungry sharks. After that all things were sombrely quiet, with one squad of men swabbing the decks, while the vessel herself, was headed, all sail on, in the wake of the *Montauk*. A half hour went by and Captain Wilton and his mate came together on the deck almost excitedly.

"Sam," said the captain. "I've found the papers and the log! There is a heap of 'em. How about the cargo?"

"Not a great deal besides the live freight," said Sam. "There isn't any too good a supply of provisions and water, either. She wasn't fitted out for a slaver, exactly."

"I know that," replied the captain. "She took 'em on only about ten days ago."

"I know what she is, though," said Sam. "She was built on Nantucket. She was meant for whalin', but the British took her right off the ways and here she is."

"Just so," exclaimed the captain. "Her papers tell the story. She was sold in England

and she sailed out of Liverpool as the privateer *Douglas*, Captain Bedford—that's Araga, I suppose. She has had all sorts of luck. Sent in a lot of prizes. How many niggers are there?"

"Two hundred and fifty-three," was Green's business-like report. "We must feed and water 'em right away. We shall lose some, anyway, I'm afraid, but they're a prime lot."

"They are selected," said the captain, a little huskily. "Come into the cabin with me. I want to read you some things. You and I have taken up a pretty difficult row to hoe."

"We can hoe it," said Green. "I kind o' guess the worst part of it is hoed already. Heave ahead. Let's hear it."

They entered the cabin as they were speaking. The pirate captain, whatever might have been his real name, lay back in his dull stupor, his parted lips now and then sending out feverish exclamations. There had been a key found for the massive, iron-bound sea-chest in the corner, for its lid came up in Captain Wilton's hand. There were many articles in the chest, clothing, arms and the like. On top of them were some manuscripts and what looked like a ship's log-book. Captain Wilton took it up and opened it, remarking:

"Never mind latitudes and longitudes, Sam, hark to this—"

"Read on," said Sam. "I'm hearing."

The captain read with ease, for the handwriting was fair, and the log had been kept, that part of it, at least, in English.

"January 3, just after breakfast, sighted schooner *Leon*. Long chase. Caught her at noon Knocked the sticks out of her and boarded. Half her crew down with Congo fever. Over 400 niggers. Picked out 280 prime pieces. Took on board and stowed them. Took papers. Set *Leon* on fire and scuttled her. She went down before we went out of sight."

"Hold on captain," exclaimed Sam. "That isn't any ship's log. That's his own di'ry and he must ha' been clear gone crazy to write it. There's another log somewhere, all reg'lar. This 'ere one tells us what we've got to do, though."

He was interrupted by an insane and faintly uttered shout from the hammock.

"I heard it," gasped Captain Araga—or Bedford. "I heard it. I saw her go down. The *Douglas* is the *Leon* till we put 'em ashore. We will land 'em all at night, at the Puenta Santa Maria. Then we will sail for—whoop! Moreno! Tessano! Take these fellows and throw them

overboard! They know too much. Put your knife into Santara! There he goes! Yah!"

He could say no more and there he lay glaring at them while he evidently waited for his men to come and carry out his orders. The men who would never come.

"Now, you see, Sam," said Captain Wilton, "we are almost all right. A British privateer, a pirate, or slaver, is a fair prize for us, but we couldn't carry any kind of Spanish craft into the Havana. We must paint out the *Leon* and paint back the *Douglas* and show nothing but the English papers. I don't know why he kept the Spaniard's logbook, but I'll study it before I throw it overboard. I don't exactly know what to do with him."

"He is a pretty sick man," said Sam. "I don't think he is likely to get well. Anyhow you had better send me with Dick on the *Montauk*. He'll need me more'n you will. I tell you what! I just do want to get home to Sally Green. I've been away long enough."

"All right," said the captain. "We're overhauling the *Montauk* every tack. Go with Dick. He is short handed anyway. I'll do well enough. It's a short run to the Puenta and to Havana—if I go there."

"Captain," said Sam, "how many, black and white, do you s'pose he left on the *Leon*, when he set her on fire and scuttled her?"

"I don't know," said the captain. "Most likely he made the crew walk the plank first. The sick and worthless blacks were all under hatches. You see, he hadn't room for them on the *Douglas* nor provender either. She's the *Leon* herself now and she must change back to the old name right away or the Spaniards 'll hang us all for taking her, instead of hanging that fellow."

"He won't be in the way long," responded Green stolidly. "I feel kind o' sure he won't live. Some times they don't ask too many questions of slave traders. The shore officials know it's a ticklish business."

"I say! You! There!" came faintly from the hammock. "I know how it is, now. You are Yankee privateers and you've taken the *Douglas*. You will all be hung for this job. This craft is English."

"Flying the black flag," calmly interjected Captain Wilton. "Burning and sinking Spanish craft or any other."

"Where are my men?" demanded the pirate with perfect self-possession, for he was in a lucid interval of his fever.

"Ask the sharks," was Wilton's stern, hollow-voiced rejoinder.

"All of them?" asked Araga, staring fixedly at him. "What? All? I am left alone? What did you say about Coromantees? What does all this mean? Speak! My head is as clear as a bell!"

There had been a strange look gathering in the face of Captain Wilton. He was an old privateersman, hardened in many a fray, but the desperate struggle with the buccaneers and the butchery with which it ended had been too much for him. As for Sam Green, even he stepped out of the cabin, drawing long breaths of air and remarking, aloud:

"I've heard tell of such things. I've fit with all sorts. I've seen ships go down, too, but I never knew anything more cold blooded than that. Drowned 'em like rats! Why, the sharks ought to come on board after him!"

Captain Wilton was at that moment looking Araga in the eyes and answering him:

"What does it mean? I ain't exactly a Bible man, but I believe in a vengeance of God Almighty, on such devils as you and your pirate crew!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FLOGGED SLAVE.

VERY slow indeed was the hour spent by Madeline Montanye after her heated talk with Nanny. She left her room, at last, and went down to the parlor. At a window of it stood a much older woman looking out upon the winter landscape.

"It does seem so long," she was saying. "O! How I wish they would come!"

"So do I, Mrs. Wilton," exclaimed Madeline. "I hope father won't stay to dinner with anybody. They dine late, too. He said he believed the salute guns meant a ship with news."

"Very likely," said Mrs. Wilton, almost absently. "I wasn't thinking of news—no—yes—I am! They might come back with a peace! Now, I do hope your father will come!"

She looked like a woman of education and intelligence upon whose features long trial and experience had done well their refining work. As she spoke to Madeline, however, her face wore an expression of suppressed but painful anxiety and she said:

"My dear, it is a year since any tidings came and all the while they have been cruising. Think of it!"

"They may not be upon the sea now," suggested Madeline. "The war is over."

"Is it?" said Mrs. Wilton sarcastically. "The army lines are just what they always have been and I guess it is the same on the ocean. I know that until the war is really ended Mark Wilton will be fighting—if he is alive. So will my son. Pray God, I may see them again! Perhaps I never will."

It was hard to say anything in reply to that, and Madeline only slipped forward and put her arms around Mrs. Wilton.

"Madeline," said she, "it is wicked to hate. I mustn't hate the British, but sometimes I actually believe your father hates them. And he is a clergyman, too."

"He never said so to me," exclaimed Madeline. Why did he—why did you ever keep it from me. He has seemed to be a Tory. Mrs. Wilton, I am grown up now."

"Child," said her friend, kindly. "Nobody ever yet knew Peter Montanye's mind, from anything on his face or tongue. There are some things I do not know, myself. That is—I mean

that I would be shot before I would tell—unless the British had left New York."

Madeline stared at her in amazement, for Mrs. Wilton's mouth was twitching, nervously, and there was a flash in her eye. In a moment more she added thoughtfully:

"Yes, you ought to know one thing. My dear, it has been on my mind ever so long. I might as well speak, now. I may die before you are twenty."

"Why—Mrs. Wilton—"

"Wait, dear. I won't stop. When your mother died, she gave me a small, sealed package for you. I am not to let you have it till then. It mustn't be opened. I won't let you have it."

"I don't want it," exclaimed Madeline.

"If I do die, it's down at the bottom of my trunk. Your name's on it. She hardly said anything, except—"

"Except what, Mrs. Wilton?"

"My dear, she was very sick and weak, and I heard her whisper, 'Madeline will know. She must know. Not now, not now. It will be soon enough, then.' "

"I wouldn't open it until then for anything," exclaimed Madeline. Keep it! Why it isn't so long to wait."

"Not long, now, dear, but I think I ought to have told you before. I will hand it to you on your birthday. I suppose it will tell you something." Then she seemed to wish to change the subject for she turned to the window and stared down the road.

"My dear," she said, "there may be news! If it is anything important, it might keep your father at old Mr. Kruger's—or he might go and dine with his army friends, to get the whole of it from them. He often does so."

"Well," said Madeline as if she was just as willing to discuss something beside the sealed packet, until she could think that matter over, "Sassago is coming, too, but it is a long tramp from the city. He may be waiting for something."

That was so. Sassago was waiting. He stood at the roadside, near the entrance of a mansion, which was evidently something more than a private dwelling. There was a sentry at the door of it; several cavalrymen stood at the foot of its front steps, each of them ready to mount the horse he was holding by the bridle, in case any errand should be brought to him by one of the uniformed aides de camp who were briskly coming and going.

The old Pequot's face seemed to be good

natured enough, after the manner which belonged to it, but he was too remarkable a visitor to escape animadversion. Not that he was ragged, for his buckskins were whole and his moccasins were well made, as was his coonskin headpiece. There was, however, something almost unservile in his manner of touching his coonskin to a British officer and one of the most dignified of those who passed stood still and returned the salute like the well-bred gentleman that he was.

"Hullo," he remarked. "Who are you?"

"He is all right," laughed another officer at his side who had not saluted. "I say, Sassago, did you hand in your fish? What are you waiting for?"

"Steward hab fish," replied Sassago. "Old Pequot wait for new paper, if Gen'al Howe want any more fish."

"That is so, Colonel," said Major Bedford. "Sir Guy's new regulations would cut him off. He has been headquarters fisherman a long time."

"I'll see to it at once," said the Colonel. "We shall want all he can catch. He must bring some to Sir Guy's as soon as he can."

"Plenty fish," said Sassago. "Want paper or sojer 'top him."

"That's all right," said the Major. "You

shall have it. Take that, too. I am coming up to Dr. Montanye's pretty soon."

Sassago knew that he was not expected to make any remarks and he pocketed the half crown in silence while the two officers went into the house. He even stepped back out of the way to wait for his promised permit, which might also be a military pass for many intents and purposes and he was muttering:

"Big redcoat Bedford forget. Old Pequot nebber forget. 'Member too much, mebbe. Bedford on'y cap'n, then, way back in 'seventy-six. Make lobster sojer flog old Pequot, 'cause he not do all dey tole him. Red nigger, he say. Flog him hard. He go away. Come back, now, Major. Washin'ton men kill ebbery lobster that flog Sassago. Bedford not kill yet. Pequot wait watch him. Take he 'calp off."

It plainly appeared that in his mind the Continentals who shot his enemies had done so on his own account, meriting his gratitude. They had, however, left him a somewhat similar duty to perform for Major Bedford, if ever an opportunity should occur, and he was ready to do his duty.

Only a few minutes later an aide came out with a paper and handed it to Sassago, saying to him:

"There's your permit, you red rascal. Take the next catch of fish to Sir Guy Carleton's quarters. Don't you be too long about it, either, or you may get a cat-o'-nine tails. Get out!"

"Ugh! Old Pequot go," was all the spoken reply of Sassago, as he turned and walked hastily away, but all the good humor had vanished from his face. In the place of it was an expression which any Pequot of the old King Philip time might have worn, with a tomahawk in his hand and a warwhoop on his lips.

CHAPTER X.

ARAGA'S TREASURES.

THE crew of the English privateer, *Douglas*, pirate and slaver on occasion, had kept her in good sea-going condition. Not one of them, however, was on board of her now, and the man who had commanded them, lying there in his hammock, was delivered as he had wished to be from any living witnesses of the deeds which he and they had done in company. There were witnesses enough, nevertheless, of the deed they had tried and failed to do, that morning, and Sam Green had carefully folded up and put away the telltale black flag.

"It might be of as much use to answer questions with," he said of it, "as even that awful ship's log in yonder."

For an hour or so after his talk with Captain Wilton, the mate and several of the crew had been busy in the between-decks.

"We must save as many as we can of them," he said. "The least they will bring is a doubloon a head. You wouldn't feed sharks on gold doubloons, would you? We'll feed 'em, and water

'em reg'lar. Cap'n Wilton 'll get 'em ashore as quick as he can. Boys, we're in for a good bit of prize money this cruise."

It looked like it, and the men worked cheerfully, even while they growled at the ghastly nature of their duties. No manacles or fetters were removed from the black passengers for there was no change whatever in the destination of the men and women who lay there in their misery. All who had freed themselves and had followed the chanting Coromantee warrior up through the hatchway had been slain by the pirates. Those who remained, therefore, were alive mainly because they had been too securely pinioned below to escape into battle and sudden death.

There was, after all, a semblance of mercy and of common humanity in the manner of the Yankee seamen who were now dealing out abundant food and drink. Some of them so strongly expressed their pity and good will that the poor black fellows understood it. More than one actually smiled gratefully in response, with a kind of dull astonishment, also, at meeting white men who could act so remarkably.

Considering the amount of slave-tending duty to be performed in addition to any other, the

schooner was really short-handed, and as soon as she could reach a slave-buying port the better it would be for all concerned. An estimate of the water and provisions on board furnished an additional argument for speedy landing.

"There are always British cruisers among the West Indies," Captain Wilton was thinking. "This craft can outrun most of them. I wish I knew just where Araga's landing was to be."

That question was uppermost in his mind when he again visited the cabin. He at once took note of a considerable change in the face and manner, of the sick man in the hammock. It was a somewhat intellectual face, bronzed and bearded, and Araga was not yet middle aged. When he now smiled and nodded at Captain Wilton, he looked younger and his bearing resembled that of a man of society.

"You are feeling better, I should say," remarked Captain Wilton. "About how long have you been sick?"

"I can't say," replied Araga, "for this is a return, a relapse, of the Congo fever. I have had it before. The crisis of this attack is past, now, and I am sure to mend rapidly. It is a good thing for you, though, that I wasn't killed."

"How do you mean?" asked Wilton.

"I mean just this," calmly responded Araga. "As it looks, you see, you and yours will be condemned as pirates for destroying the *Leon*, some days ago, and for taking out the slaves after murdering her crew. There is plunder enough on board to send you all to the yardarm, whether you are captured at sea or whether you take the schooner into any port in the world."

An exceedingly cunning person was this pirate captain, as well as cruel, depraved, reckless, but he was not now talking with a very young man.

"Just so," said Captain. "I see. We are the fellows that sunk the *Leon*. That is a good get off. But if you are on board with us, how about your own neck?"

"That is what I am quite able to take care of, and your own neck, too," replied Araga laughingly. "I know the Spanish traders who are to buy the cargo, and you do not. I have landed black goods before now, both at Santa Maria and in the cove behind Puenta des Arenas."

"I know both places well enough," said Captain Wilton. "The owners of the *Leon* are likely to be on hand."

"They certainly will," said Araga. "It may not be easy to answer all of their questions, either. I can do it, however, and you can not. I

will make a square bargain with you. We will go halves on the entire cargo, of all sorts. I will see to the sale of the blacks. Then we will run into the Havana, you will land me and my share there and sail out again. I shall take my next chance to get back to England. I am Senor Araga, of course, until I am safely under the red cross flag."

"Just so," said Captain Wilton. I think I see how that very thing could be worked."

Neither of them could hear an entirely mental unvoiced echo, a little outside of the cabin door. Sam Green was there, eavesdropping unintentionally, and he was thinking:

"Just so. I think I see how he means to work it. He would get away with his swag and leave our fellows in a sure trap, between the guns of Moro Castle at Havana and a British cruiser or two. About the worst danger for them is in that there hammock. They mustn't go ahead with any such blood-thirsty Jony on board."

"I shall be stronger to-morrow," said Araga, confidently. "We can finish up this talk then. I had better rest, now."

"Cap'n Wilton," asked Sam at the door, "may I jist see you a minute?"

"I'm coming, Sam," he said. "I guess you are right, Araga. You had better lie still."

Out he went and the sick pirate turned over painfully, for he needed to conceal a satirical laugh which insisted upon bubbling up from within him.

"I've caught him," he whispered. "I shall send him to a yardarm safe enough. If I get a full half share this way, though, it will be a good deal more than I'd have had with Moreno and all those devils to divide with. I can hide a good deal, too."

Captain Wilton had done that, for he had entirely concealed his opinions and purposes. Nevertheless, his first remark to Green was:

"Sam, I don't exactly know what to do with that sea serpent."

"Well," drawled Sam, "If you don't the devil will. We're close up with the *Montauk* jest now. You'll want a good talk with Dick. I'll stay here while you go aboard and finish givin' him his sailin' orders."

"He doesn't need too many," said the Captain, "but I'll go for a talk with him. I won't be gone long. He's signaling the prizes now. I guess they're over their scare if they had any."

"All right," said Sam, and in a few minutes more Captain Wilton was in a boat pulling toward the *Montauk*, both vessels being hove to.

Green was now temporarily in charge of the *Douglas-Leon.* His first impulse was to walk aft and look over to criticise the work which was doing there by the hands of the best artists among his crew.

"Good sign paintin'" he said. "There won't be a trace of the *Leon* left. There ought not to be—not even in the cabin. What's a feller to do, anyhow? I don't like it. If he was a well man, now, on his feet! No, Cap'n Wilton'd never do it. I guess I'll go and take a look at him. I think he is a pretty sick pirate."

Captain Araga, if that name were still to. be given him, was not any longer lying in his hammock. After several futile efforts he had at last managed to get out of it. He was not standing or walking; he was eagerly creeping toward the strong box from which Captain Wilton had taken the logbooks. As yet nothing more had been removed, for that was apparently the best place on the *Leon* to store valuables in. Even the key had been carelessly left in the lock.

Panting with weakness, fever and strong excitement, Araga raised the lid and began to search within.

"I will put these back," he said of several bags which he landed on the floor with a clinking

sound. "I will tell him they are here to be divided."

Something he was searching for was away down under all and he found it easily. It was a kind of pad covered with oiled silk and provided with a ribbon so that he could hang it around his neck under his shirt. As he did so, however, another similar ribboned pad was for a moment exposed upon his broad hairy bosom.

"I have it," he said. "It is safe now. I shall want the cash for that in England, and I needn't divide it with any Yankees. Their share of all the rest will go to the Spaniards and they'll go to the hangman."

Then he sat still, panting and leaning against the chest and muttering to himself, almost inaudibly, for, as Sam Green had remarked of him, he was a very sick pirate and he was not yet safely landed in England among the repurchased estates of his family.

CHAPTER XI.

THE UNSUSPECTED PATRIOT.

"NO, Madeline," said Mrs. Wilton, as they stood together at the parlor window. "That was all. Don't! I am terribly low to-day. I suppose it is this long suspense."

"But about father. I have a right to know."

"Please don't, dear. I must not answer any questions."

"I won't, then," said Madeline, for her friend's voice was tremulous. "I suppose you have good reasons. You have a great deal to try you, anyway."

"My dear," said Mrs. Wilton, "whatever I know, you shall know in due season. It will be soon enough, I am afraid. It is a strange world. Think of it! Oh, how I do wish peace with England would come!"

"Peace?" said Madeline. "I am sick with waiting for it. And you have ten times as much cause as I have for being sick about it. I do hope Captain Wilton and Richard will come home right away. I feel as if I know them both, as if they were of our own family. Dick must be grown up."

"He is first mate of the *Montauk*," said his mother proudly. "They say he is a splendid seaman, brave as a lion."

"I am glad of it," replied Madeline. "I've always wished I had a brother. Then he would be with the Continentals. I am sure I shall like Dick when he comes, if only for your sake."

"Of course you will," said Mrs. Wilton.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Madeline impatiently, "I do wish father would hurry home."

Dr. Montanye was not intending to hurry home. Oh the contrary, after finishing his business with his friend Kruger, he had called at the head-quarters of the commanding general. Here he had lingered, chatting with officers whom he knew, until he had picked up many items of news which might otherwise have escaped him. He even had the good luck to fall in with several naval officers who were ready to give him the latest town talk from London as they had heard it before sailing. Undoubtedly men talked a great deal in the old days, before the coming of the evening and morning newspapers.

From the quarters of Sir Guy Carleton Dr. Montanye strolled elsewhere, among civilians as well as army and navy men. At all places he was well received, for the stern reserve of his

manner was accompanied by excellent conversational powers and a peculiarly caustic wit.

The sum and substance of all the information he collected seemed to be that both the United States and Great Britain were watching a long, tedious game of diplomacy and that nobody could guess when it would end.

Sassago had set out for home as soon as he could, after obtaining his precious "permit" to go and fish wherever he might be pleased to go. On his arrival he did not enter the Montanye place by the front gate but by way of the barns. His moccasined feet carried him into the kitchen almost noiselessly, and Nanny, at the fireplace, was startled by suddenly feeling his hand upon her shoulder.

"Ow! You red debbil!" she exclaimed. "Where ye bin? Don't ye tetch me!"

"Old Pequot 'calp Nanny some day," he said, threateningly. "Make good girl ob her. Sassago been to town. Hear all redcoat off'ser say put Nanny on board ship. Carry her off! 'teal her!"

That very thing had been done for quite a large number of the colored persons found on Manhattan Island by the King's forces. It had been an easy way of confiscating the property of an absent Rebel, Yankee or Dutchman, but there

was hardly anything else that those who were in danger of it dreaded so much.

Nothing could have made Nanny's hair "stand on end," but there was genuine terror in her face when she turned upon Sassago and exclaimed:

"Sho! You awful debbil! W'ot yo' mean? I's nebber let 'em! Miss Madeline won't let em. De Doctor's a good man. Nebber he sell one ob he own people!"

"Redcoat 'teal Nanny," reiterated the red humorist. "Take her with him w'en he sail away. Go pretty soon, now. Old Pequot want to see Miss Madeline."

His voice and Nanny's had been heard by other ears, however, and he now had only to turn around to get his wish, for Madeline and Mrs. Wilton had come out hastily into the kitchen. Their questions were also hasty and he had his own way of telling the news he had collected.

"Big ship come," he said. "Fire guns. Ship off'ser tell Gen'l Howe, Gen'l Guy, pack up all dey mean to take wid 'em. Den go away. So! Gen'l Washin'ton lose he las' chance to 'calp lobster and Hess'n if he don't come right now. Sassago want 'em all kill!"

He was intensely in earnest and so was Nanny when she interrupted with:

"Dey mus'n't take me! Oh! Missy Madeline! don't let 'em take me!"

The vengeful expression on the Pequot's face changed toward its customary gravity as he remarked:

"Sassago save Nanny. Take off 'calp. Red coat Gen'al no want her, den. No want brack woman with no top. T'ink he bes' 'calp her now."

"You ole red debbil!" screamed Nanny.

"Now, Sassago," said Mrs. Wilton, "do you stop pestering her and tell us all you know. Why, Nanny, it's only one of his lies. You're in no danger."

"I won't gib him he supper!" she grumbled and the Pequot went on with his news.

He was ready to report all that he had gathered but he seemed to be very little pleased with it. He had been cherishing a hope, now in apparent peril of being blighted, that in due season all of King George's forces on or about his island would meet the same retribution that had fallen upon the men directly concerned in his flogging. He said as much, later in the day, to Dr. Montanye himself on his arrival from the city, and he added:

"Old Pequot all ready. Go tell General Wassin'ton come now. No let lobster and Hess'n get away."

Lobster was an American name for redcoated soldiers which he would not have employed in the hearing of one of them, probably, but his master did not reprove him for it. He did not even contradict Sassago's views of the military situation, but said to him:

"Yes, you will see General Washington. You are to make another trip to Newburg. Now you have your new permit, you can pass through the lines safely. How about the fish for headquarters' messes?" "Ugh!" said the Pequot. "Go get 'em. Dey say flog him again. S'pose he no fetch fish. Plenty fish, right away. Ugh! Go see Gen'al Wassin'ton. Tell him come kill 'em, 'fore get away." "Off with you, then," said the doctor. "Get as many fish as you can. Bring them here. I'll send them to Sir Guy—"

"Father!" interrupted the voice of Madeline herself, behind. "I never knew that you corresponded with Washington!"

"My dear," he quickly but quietly responded, "you do not know, now. But O! How weary I am of living with my neck in a halter!"

"Redcoat hang all spy," remarked Sassago. "Old Pequot saw 'em hang Cap'n Hale. Wassin'ton hang spy, too, up ribber. Hang Sassago? No! Shoot him!"

CHAPTER XII.

OVERBOARD WITH JONAH.

THE boats conveying the effects of the men who were to go with Captain Wilton had to pass back and forth more than once between the *Montauk* and the *Douglas*. There was time, therefore, for a good talk between father and son.

"You will see your mother before I do," said the captain. Tell her I am coming as soon as I can. Say I shall bring enough to set us all up again."

"Seems to me, though," said Dick, "that this last strike is a getting into the slave trade, a little suddenly. Mother'd never consent to that sort of business."

"She might be set against it," acknowledged the captain, and he added: "it's just the thing to make money on, though. A good many 'll go into it, when the war's ended. This 'ere *Douglas* is a clipper to go and we have the *Montauk*, too. You might sail one of 'em and I the other. There won't be any more privateering."

Richard Wilton did not seem to agree with his father. If he had the received ideas of his time

concerning the ownership of human beings, after they were caught for that purpose, he had now looked into the hold of the *Douglas* and he had heard of the fate of the *Leon* and her black passengers. Both lessons were disagreeably fresh in his mind.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "Money in it? Yes, but I don't care to sail with such a cargo. Not all the way from Africa. It makes me sick to think of it."

"You'd get over that, my boy," replied the captain. "I shall learn a deal about the Cuba trade just in landing these fellows. They say, though, that New York won't do. Perhaps South America 'll be the best market, after all."

"I guess," said Dick, thoughtfully, "New York 'll have trade enough for me. Anyhow, we haven't got there yet."

"We shall get there," said his father heartily, not altogether unwilling to change the subject. "Make it a quick run in. I'll go back and clap on all sail for Cuba. Besides, I don't know, yet, all there is in that pirate's hands and it's about time for me to find out."

He was quickly in his boat, after that, but he was not aware of several occurrences which had taken place in his absence.

One of these was Araga's crawl to the chest to get that oil-skin pad and hang it around his neck. He had succeeded, he had rested and then he had groped around in the chest as if he were searching for something more. He tried to put the bags in again, but they were too heavy for him.

"I'm getting faint," he muttered. "I must go back to the hammock. Where are those papers! Has that Yankee villain found them? Has he carried off the logbooks? If he has, he must let me throw them overboard."

The fever was coming upon him, evidently. He began to rave more and more incoherently about papers, logbooks, treasures, and the fate he was proposing for Captain Wilton and his crew.

"Ah!" he shouted at last, pulling a parcel out of the chest. "I have them! I will take a pistol, too, and a knife!"

At that moment the cabin door opened and Sam Green stepped in. Then, only a half suppressed yell escaped his lips as he sprang forward, for, whether from force of habit or from fever insanity, Araga was raising the handsome silver-mounted pistol that he held in his hand and it was cocked. Sam's cutlass flashed from the sheath

in time to strike up the pistol muzzle. Then hardly had its loud report rang out before the glittering blade came down with all the strength of the brawny privateersman's arm and Araga fell, cleft to the eyes.

"Thank God that he drew a weapon on me!" exclaimed Sam. "I was half afraid I couldn't make out to kill him. Now it was done in fight I don't care."

The privateer was dead now, at all events, and his treachery had perished with him. Sam wiped the cutlass and hurriedly threw the chinking bags back into the chest for he heard the sound of coming feet. Even before he could slam down the chest-lid there were men at the door.

"It's all right boys," Sam said to them. "He missed me but I didn't miss him. He was going for his box but I guess he hasn't done any mischief."

"I'm glad he's done for," said one of the sailors. "Some of us were just a drawin' cuts to see which was to knife him. We wouldn't sail with him on board."

"You won't have to gamble for it," replied Sam. "Clear out now and I'll have him ready to go over the rail in a jiffy."

Out went the sailors, but Araga's shirt front

was still open and the two pads had caught Sam's eye. They were in his hand the next moment and a thorough search followed, from head to foot, without discovering anything more of much value.

"I guess these things are mine by rights," muttered Sam. "Cap'n Wilton'll divide the rest fair and square if he gets home with it. Stuff on this craft is as safe, too, as if it were on the *Montauk*. If he's ever goin' into the slave trade, though, I'm goin' in with him."

He evidently had no feelings to be disturbed by that business and he showed only the sincerest gratification, a few minutes later, when his men pitched a heavy burden over the side and the backfin of a shark vanished with it.

"He'll get him," said Sam. "So will the devil. That's the last of one pirate crew."

"They'd sent over many a poor fellow, though, before their turn came," gruffly remarked an old sailor. "I hope God Almighty will clear the seas of all like 'em."

Captain Wilton was coming on board, now, and all the seamen went to their duties. Not one of them was aware, however, that when Sam Green shook hands with the Captain, on departing for the *Montauk*, he had not said a word to him about the affair in the cabin.

"Let him find it out after I'm gone," thought Sam. "I didn't open any of those bags, but I shouldn't wonder if I'd won somethin' else that'll make Sally Green open her eyes. I want to see her and the children, I do."

He reached the *Montauk* and away she went in the wake of her prizes, all three of the vessels being bound for the capes of the Delaware.

"Sam," asked Dick, now rating as Captain Richard Wilton of the *Montauk*, "did you see Araga before you came away?"

"Why," drawled Sam, "that there critter's as dead as a door nail."

"Dead?" exclaimed Dick. "I didn't think he was as sick as that."

"Just so," said Sam. "Somethin' was the matter with his head. He gave his last kick before your father came back and the men hove him overboard. It was a mighty good riddance!"

"I should say it was," said Dick. "It is bad for a man to have anything in his head."

He asked no questions, for he and Sam Green were close friends and there might be something not worth knowing.

"That was what killed him," said Sam. "Dick, the old *Montauk's* travelin' fine but I'm goin' for a glass of grog. "This 'ere's been a good deal of a day."

"I reckon you do need something," replied Dick, drawing a long breath. "I'm glad I wasn't there, though."

The mate of the *Montauk* went below and at that very moment the elder Captain Wilton, now of the *Douglas*, was in the cabin of the schooner, staring at an empty hammock, and like his son on the other craft he was saying: "Just so! I'm glad I wasn't here. He is gone."

He turned for an inspection of the cabin and then added:

"Sam didn't think I needed to know? He should have told me. I'll look into the box again. I won't question the men right away."

Up came the chest lid and it seemed to do him good to open and examine those bags. Most of them contained only silver, of several coinages. A smaller bag from the rest was Portuguese gold coin and another was Spanish.

"Some English, too," he remarked, "but they don't seem to have murdered any Frenchmen, that had any gold to lose. Our folks haven't coined anything but Continental paper currency. I'd like to see an American gold coin as big as one of those doubloons. The heftiest sack of all is this bag of English guineas."

He did not undertake to count his treasures

and he did not stare at them very long. Back went all into the box but even as he was locking it something on the floor caught his eye and he shuddered. It was a clot of fresh blood and he gave it but one more glance and walked out of the cabin.

"The air in here is awfully hot and close," he said. "I want to breathe!"

"Cap'n!"—a tall lank seaman stood before him with the appearance of a man who had some important report to make.

"Well?" said the captain. "First thing! How about Araga?"

"He is dead and overboard, sir. So are three more of the niggers. We've got to take pretty good care of them sir."

"How about Araga?" insisted the captain.

"He fired a pistol at Sam Green, sir. That was what ailed him."

"O! Well! You tell me about it some other time. Feed 'em well. Water 'em reg'lar. We'll save all we can."

Nevertheless, the most discouraging feature of the slave trade was the fact that so many of the most robust Africans insisted on dying at sea.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LOOSE BRICKS.

THERE were many fine fish caught for Sir Guy Carleton, that evening, through an air hole in the thick ice of the Harlem river, but the fisherman was not thinking of Sir Guy's great dinner to Admiral Digby.

"Heap bad," he said as he landed one more handsome flounder. "All redcoat get away. Sassago no 'calp Bedford."

He seemed to have revengeful claims upon other military servants of King George and the coming peace might rob him of them all.

Away down at the Montanye place, other members of the family he belonged to, or that belonged to him, were also thinking of their English acquaintances. Sitting in her own room alone, Madeline was saying to herself:

"Our old neighbors will come back, after the British get away. I shall have some that I can like. I won't have to be all the while so careful of what I say. All the men and women I know are on the other side of the war. How I have hated to keep still, sometimes, when they were

talking about Washington and the Continentals!"

Her trial in this respect had been much augmented by her father insisting upon her taking part in the social affairs of the garrison. Although so very young, she had attended many balls and dinner parties. Long ago, she had even witnessed the amateur theatrical entertainments gotten up by that accomplished young officer, Major Andre, Adjutant General of the British army, whom everybody now remembered so regretfully.

For various reasons, she was thinking of social matters, now, and she said of Major Andre: "I was so sorry for him! So I am, now, for all these other prisoners. War is terrible!"

She had heard a great deal from her father concerning the exchanges of prisoners. She understood, now, better than at the time, why there had been so much angry fire in his eyes when he described the wan, spectre-like shapes in ragged uniforms, or almost destitute of decent clothing, which were marched from the "old church" dens or brought in boats from the prison ships to be delivered to their friends beyond the lines. They were not so many, after all, as were the others who, year after year, had escaped when their corpses were thrown overboard to be swept out by the tides into the deep sea.

According to Madeline's mental account, there were now no patriotic young men left in New York. Perhaps she would hardly have believed in the patriotism of any young New Yorker who was not in the Continental army. If so, there was scant justice in such a decision, since at no time had Washington's military resources enabled him to employ thousands of young fellows from all parts of the country who were eager to serve their country. Madeline was very young, however, and her indignant comment upon some whom she knew was:

"Why couldn't they get away and fight the British on the sea, like Richard Wilton and his father?"

She said something like that to her father, soon after his return and his response was a surprise to her.

"My dear," he said, "you don't know much about privateering. As a great many of them carry it on, it is only a shade better than piracy. It is a ruthless business, anyhow."

"Why, father!" she exclaimed. "Our privateers are almost all the navy we have. We must fight the British!"

His face had grown very grim and dark and he answered slowly:

"Well—well. It is a useful kind of piracy I must admit. I suppose the Wiltons have made it pay them. What a fleet of Yankee privateers, though, will be thrown out of business when peace comes! They will have to go into something else. I wish I could be sure that none of them will become out and out buccaneers."

He turned to go away and his daughter looked after him, thinking:

"I don't believe he really cares so much what they did against England. Mrs. Wilton's husband would never be a pirate. She is too good a woman. Richard Wilton wouldn't either. I shall be glad to have them come back—for her sake."

After supper Dr. Montanye went up to his own room. In external appearance he was as calm and dignified as usual until the door had closed behind him and he was alone. Then came a very sudden change.

"Thank God I escaped that Digby dinner!" he exclaimed, taking off his coat and throwing it upon a chair. "How long is this awful strain to last? I shall not be safe for a moment until the fleet sails away. I am not safe from an army noose, and that isn't all! I have heard enough to know that some fresh batch of navy men may possibly bring back my old danger. How it has

eaten, eaten, eaten, into my very heart through all these years! Was it all my fault that I was caught by wolves and had to be a wolf? God is my judge, not man. How shall I meet him? I dare not think!"

He sat still for a moment and then he arose, remarking: "I'll take a look at that stuff, just now."

Up through the middle of the Montanye mansion arose the tall, massive brick chimney. It had one of its fire places in that second story chamber. Like most chimneys of that day, its construction seemed a lavish waste of bricks.

On one side of the chimney, a tall old mahogany wardrobe stood against the wall, but Dr. Montanye now rolled it out easily. The brick work so uncovered looked slightly out of repair, if one were to scrutinize it closely. The doctor did so and found several of the bricks loose enough to be pulled out and laid upon the floor. Through the opening so made he could discern a considerable cavity, caused by some previous removal of inner bricks. He reached in and seemed to be feeling around, touching things with his fingers as one might do who wished to ascertain if they were all there.

"All safe, of course," he said. "Even if the

house should burn down it would leave the chimney standing and I could manage to get them out —I think."

Even as he spoke, he slipped in a small bag which chinked as he dropped it.

"I don't know," he muttered. "Ought I to put in those other bricks with mortar? They may search houses, for some reason or other, before they go away. All those things in that trunk, too—they are safe unless my loyalty should be questioned. My loyalty to the King of England? O thou, my God, forgive me! O what a life has been mine! What a life it is, now!"

He rose to his feet, for he had been carefully replacing all loose bricks, and he rolled back the wardrobe into its place.

There was more than one large trunk in the room, not unreasonably, for an elderly gentleman of means collects many things as the years go by. He went, now, and stood by an ample portmanteau, horsehide covered and having strong brass clamps and hinges. It lay in a corner and there was dust upon its lid.

"That is so!" he remarked. "There is altogether too much in this thing. I hardly know what to do about it. Why is it that I do not destroy them? I have tried to do so again and

again, and somehow there they are. It seems as if it would kill me to touch them, to-day. No, I cannot, but I must get them out of the way before I die. Die? That is a long time, yet, unless they hang me. Death is horrible! I don't know about it. That pain in my side comes again, at times. Curse his boarding-pike! He never used it again!"

One secret was concealed by the bricks of the chimney. It now appeared as if the trunk held another. What if the most dangerous secret of all was hidden behind the stern face and the high character of Rev. Dr. Peter Montanye himself?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RED CROSS FLAG.

THREE vessels make a squadron, and Captain Richard Wilton, of the American armed cruiser *Montauk*, pacing his deck and thinking of his two prizes, while the daylight slowly faded, felt some of the anxieties and responsibilities of a commodore.

He was one of those well built young fellows who need only reasonable care to look always well dressed, and he had been "fixing up" a little, as became the commander of the *Montauk*. He was in very good spirits, for every knot which the jaunty schooner was making, as she sped on before the favoring breeze, was bringing him nearer his harbor and then his home.

"We're going finely," said he to Sam Green, as the mate came along. "We're all right now. What do you think of it?"

"Well," said Sam, "we've men enough to handle her, but not enough to do anything with the guns."

"I don't want any more gunning," said Dick. "What we're after is a quick run in. It's a

British cruising ground, though, and we must keep a sharp lookout."

"Glad it's likely to be a dark night," said Sam. "The first watch is mine. Hadn't you better go below for a snooze? You'll have the morning watch you know."

"All right," said Dick, and down he went to his cabin, leaving Sam in charge.

The young commander closed his cabin door behind him, but instead of going to his bunk he went to a stoutly made locker in a corner and half nervously opened it.

"We must get it somehow," he said aloud. "I'd feel almost like death if we were to lose all this, just now. There ought not to be so much of it on board, anyhow."

He turned over some of the things in the locker without taking them up. Among his valuables, however, were a number of letters and one of these, perhaps the latest, he opened and began to read.

"All the way around, from hand to hand," he muttered, "till it found me at Antwerp. Some other letters never did reach me."

This was evidently an epistle which had been penned in Mrs. Wilton's room at the Montanye place, months and months ago.

"She always has so much to say about pretty little Madeline," he remarked. "Well, no; not so little, now. Mother says she has grown up, and that she's a beauty. Anyhow, she is the only girl in New York that I know or care for. That is for her, and so is that. She and her father have been wonderfully good to mother."

Dick's gratitude had taken shape somewhat liberally. The turquoise set he held up was a valuable one and the diamond ring was a sparkler. The handful of laces which he wrapped around them when he put them back were of the costliest, but he did not mention any price paid for them on land or sea.

"Mother wouldn't like it. I know she wouldn't," he said, "if I didn't bring home something for Madeline. I wonder if she is really as pretty a girl as mother says she is."

His thoughts of home may have drifted on after that, but not far, for in a very few minutes more he was sound asleep in his berth.

Hours later the "Commodore" was on deck again keeping his watch. It was all too dark, however, for him to see anything beyond the bulwarks of his own ship, save the lights upon his two prizes and the white crests of the nearer billows. Then he had another turn below and it

was in the dark hour before the dawn that he felt a heavy hand upon his shoulder, arousing him.

"What is it, Sam?" he asked.

"Come up, up, Cap'n," replied Sam. "I don't like the looks of things. Lights!"

"Where away?" inquired Dick.

"Well to wind'ard," said the mate. "I signalled the prizes and we're all keeping away, but it'll be kind o' daylight within about thirty minutes."

In less than two minutes they were standing together upon the deck.

"We had a sprinkle o' rain," said Sam. "You couldn't see nothin'. Now it's clearin', but you can't guess what we've been runnin' into."

"Three lights besides the prizes," growled Dick. "No tellin' what they are."

"We shall be able to tell before long," said the mate, gloomily. "If it's the British fleet, my chance for seein' Sally isn't as good as it was."

All of the crew were now on deck, to join in that intensely anxious watching. The light came slowly at first because of clouds which withheld it, and it broke out over the sea all the more suddenly when these were swept away.

"That's it, Sam!" shouted the young captain. "Cruisers, every one of 'em!"

"The nighest, hereaway," called back Sam, "is one o' them ten gun brigs. Some of 'em are flyers to go. The next to wind'ard looks like a corvette. Mebbe twenty guns, you know. That there further sail's jist the heaviest kind. What do you say?"

"Drop the prizes," exclaimed Dick. "Our only chance is to save the *Montauk*. It's a clean pair o' heels or a British prison."

"They'll get our fellows in the prizes," growled Sam. I don't guess they'll hang anybody, but it's awful hard on the men."

Richard Wilton stood still for a moment, as a man might of whom some terrible question had been asked which he alone could answer.

"I could get away myself," he was thinking, "but what about the prize crews?"

Most of the crew of the *Montauk* had drawn near him and they were all studying his face, for a look of stern determination was brightening upon it.

"Men!" he shouted, his voice ringing out as clear as a trumpet. "That's a British squadron. The *Montauk* can escape, now. Perhaps she can't if we lose any time. Our shipmates are in the prizes. Will you take the risk of it with me or shall we run away and leave 'em? I say, save 'em, if we can, and take our chances!"

"Aye, aye, aye, sir! We are with you! Hurrah for Captain Dick Wilton! Save the men! Hurrah! Many and hearty were the heroic responses, but every sailor among them could understand the risk to be taken and they sprang away to their places as if they were going into battle.

That was really what they were doing, for in changing the *Montauk's* course toward her prizes she was also turning her head toward the enemy. There was much signalling all the while and the prize crews knew what was expected of them.

Nearer, nearer, grew the peril, while the sails of the British cruisers lifted high above the tossing sea and their flags could be more plainly made out. They, too, were signalling. On the prize brig and on the three-master, moreover, there were hearts which grew joyful as those of the Yankee privateersmen went down. The captive English crews and passengers were a happy lot of people that brilliant January morning, as they saw their own flag drawing nearer and knew that the hated "pine tree" must soon come down

From each of the prize ships was now launched a boat, heavy with men and merchandise, for the sailors could not consent to leave behind them anything which might readily be carried. The rowers pulled lustily, sending back the best

replies they could think of to the taunting shouts which followed them from the vessels which they had thus been compelled to set at liberty. There was scant ceremony about the manner of their coming on board the *Montauk*. The boats arrived almost simultaneously and no sooner were their crews mustered upon the deck of the *Montauk* than they understood the situation and burst out into wild cheers for their unselfish captain and heroic shipmates. "I'm glad to have 'em all on board," remarked Sam Green. "We might do something with the guns, now."

"Get up shot for the thirty-two," replied Dick. "We won't let 'em get near enough for short range pieces. It'll be touch and go, I'm afraid. The corvette's making for the prizes. That fellow away off yonder is a heavy."

"I guess she's a sixty-gun ship," said Sam. "There's more mischief in one of them than there is in a seventy-four. They're all fast, they say, and they carry the heaviest kind o' metal."

"Clap on every inch o' canvas," shouted Dick. "The old *Montauk* must do her best this time!"

"She's agoin', sir," came back from among the men. "We'll fight before we'll be taken."

Nevertheless, some of them noticed with gloomy headshaking how perceptibly the ten-gun British cruiser had gained upon them while they

had been taking on board the prize crews.

"Captain," said a sailor, "she will be within range in ten minutes."

"In our range," said Dick, "but perhaps not hers. We'll give her a pill shortly."

"Cap'n," said Sam Green, "they have boarded the British brig."

"Let 'em have her," said Dick. "I hardly counted on carrying her in, nor the Liverpool boat. They've boarded her, too. All right. We haven't really lost anything, yet."

"We mustn't lose the *Montauk*," said Sam. "That fellow's gainin' on us."

"Don't say anything to the men, just now," responded Dick, quietly. "Turn your glass to leeward—sou'west a little by south."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Sam. "Are we runnin' into the teeth of a whole British coastin' fleet? This 'ere may be their West Ingy squadron, for all we know. That's another big ship."

"Not into their teeth," said Dick. "Don't you see, Sam? We ran right through them, in the night. It's going to be mostly a stern chase, and we may get away."

"Not," said Sam, "if this 'ere new feller should lay his course across our'n. I tell you what, Cap'n Dick Wilton. I feel as if I was about ready to fight a line o' battle ship—I do!"

CHAPTER XV.

MADELINE'S VISITORS.

THE Montanye place was wide awake that morning. The first important arrival, perhaps, was a sled-load of fish on its way to the steward and the cook of Sir Guy Carleton.

Dr. Montanye himself had been dignifiedly waiting for the fish and the fisherman and he had provided another hand than Sassago's to haul the sled to the General's quarters. His Pequot slave did but look him in the face with an exultant grin when the very excellent catch went on its journey down the south road.

"Old Pequot eat some, now," he said. "Then go see Gen'al Wassin'ton."

Whether he had slept while fishing, or between bites, or did not require sleep, he seemed as fresh as usual. He even appeared to be in high spirits and kindly offered to scalp Nanny at once, to protect her from kidnapping and exportation.

"Red debbil shet he mouf!" she angrily responded. "Nanny cut her t'roat 'fore she go to England."

"Gen'al Guy, he want her," said Sassago. "Send 'quad o' lobster sojers. Tie up Nanny. Put her on ship. Ugh!"

He could give a genuine Indian grunt at times. His ancient tribe had disappeared, but this remnant of it was as much a Pequot as if King Philip were yet alive and on the war-path. He had only time for his breakfast before his owner summoned him upstairs for a conference.

Not many words were needed, truly. The long, thin packet from Mr. Kruger and another somewhat like it were deftly hidden among the Pequot's buckskins and then he was quickly out of the house. He took no sled with him, but a long handled scoop-net might have suggested that he was a fisherman duly provided with a "permit" to obtain supplies for the mess tables of garrison officers. He was thinking of them, it may be, for he remarked aloud:

"Old Pequot go see Wassin'ton. Tell him come an' 'calp 'm all."

The next visitor to the Montanye mansion was a very great man, coming upon what he deemed a very great errand. He was a large man and fine, for he was a British soldier who may have first been disciplined as a flunkey and had not ceased to be one when serving, now, as

one of Sir Guy's orderlies. It had been given him this morning, to perform for the General the vast condescension of inviting the daughter of a petty American clergyman to the grand ball that was to be given in honor of the Admiral and the officers of the fleet. The orderly came on horseback, of course, and when he pulled in at the piazza steps it required special effort for so much of starch and dignity to dismount. This was, indeed, so quiet, so plebeian a place, to receive so much distinction!

Every glance he cast around him betrayed his sentiments, which were, after all, only those of a large part of his countrymen, including his unwise king. Undue contempt for the colonies and colonists had entered largely among the causes of the war, in spite of all the efforts of the best statesmen of the mother country. It had, therefore, been a thing of value, for its consequences relating to the independence of the United States.

The message was delivered, its bearer remounted and rode away, and Madeline had something to consider.

"Father," she asked, "how came they to invite me? It is to be very select. Even the great dining-room at Fraunce's will be too small for them to dance in—"

"My dear," he said, "you must go. So must I. There are reasons why we cannot refuse. It is an important affair."

There was no ripple in the iron calmness of his face, but somehow she found her thoughts running out hastily after the old Pequot and his errand—if he had one. She believed he had and that it was but one of many. Her father had sent him!

"Of course we must go," she said, slowly, thoughtfully, "I will go and see Mrs. Wilton. I wonder what she will say?"

There was half a surprise waiting for her in Mrs. Wilton's room, when she got there.

"Why, Madeline," she replied to the announcement made to her, "this is good news. I was almost afraid we were not to be invited and that might mean something dangerous. We know enough to understand that, now, my dear."

"O!" interrupted Madeline. "Don't say another word! I won't let them dream what an American I am. If I did, I might make trouble for him. Hark? Who can that be?"

Mrs. Wilton had already stepped very quickly to her window and she replied:

"It is Major Bedford, dear. Nobody is with him. Now! do you really know what kind of man he is?"

"I guess I do," said Madeline. "Why, they are all alike. Everybody knows what they are."

"That is not all," said Mrs. Wilton. "They say he is the next heir, or something like it, to the barony of Towton. When one poor old gouty profligate dies, Major Bedford may become my Lord Towton."

"Yes," said Madeline. "Then there will be another profligate holding the title until he dies, and then some profligate we don't know will step in. They're all alike!"

She was too much in the habit of passing wholesale, sweeping judgments, it may be. She could not possibly have known of whom she was speaking. Nevertheless, all "puritanical people," all with the peculiar notions belonging, for instance, to a clergyman's daughter, had a dim idea of the kind of morals likely to be left behind at a high society dinner table after the cloth and women and restraint and decency went out of the room.

Madeline received the Major very well indeed, in her pleasant, plainly furnished drawing room, her father also joining in a hearty welcome before going out to other affairs. The really accomplished British officer was also prudent, for she did not learn from him, or otherwise, that he

had been instrumental in keeping the Montanye name upon Sir Guy's list when so many more pretentious candidates were marked off to keep down the number. He had both tact and experience and at the same time he was entirely sincere while his eyes and manner, as well as his speech, acknowledged for him that he considered Madeline Montanye a very beautiful woman. He had said to Sir Guy's staff that she would be the belle of the ball and now it was a part of his errand to tell her that a sleigh would be sent for the entire Montanye party. He was not so clumsy as to say that it would be sent by himself, whether or not she were aware that such attentions were not paid to all who were to dance at Fraunce's tavern. He did, indeed, go so far as to say:

"We owe you something, anyway, Miss Montanye. The dinner itself is under very special obligation to your very remarkable Indian chief. He kindly offered to "'calp" anybody interfering with his due delivery of fish. They came safely."

The Major was an entertaining man, conversationally, and he did not make his call too long.

All the while Madeline did hospitably, for she was thinking of her father, and her visitor went away with a self-satisfying idea of the impression he had made upon the most intensely American

young woman in the garrison town of New York.

"She is a beauty!" he exclaimed. "How pretty she did look when she was defending her Indian! I hope she is a good dancer. I'm glad I have found somebody in this cursed place worth falling in love with!"

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE JAWS OF THE LION.

THE British privateer, *Douglas*, lately the Spanish pirate or slaver *Leon*, now more or less an American with a fine black cargo in her hold, was sailing swiftly southward. With every tack that she made she was getting into a latitude which might be warm for her in more senses than one. It may, therefore, have been with reference to possibly better weather that Captain Mark Wilton had suppressed his patriotism and was flying the Red Cross flag.

"Most other craft won't ask so many curious questions of that thing," he said. "I'll try not to go near enough to any British cruiser to have to answer signals."

He seemed to be in good spirits and to feel better with every fresh discovery of the fine sailing qualities of his "pirate," as he called her. He was thinking over his circumstances when he studied the sea and the wind.

"I haven't found so much cash on board as I wish there was," he said to himself, "but Dick's share and mine will be pretty good. The men

will be satisfied, too, when we come to divide it. They don't know much about it yet. She's armed to the teeth and she might have whipped the *Montauk* if she could have used her guns. She's about the right thing for a slaver. That's to be the paying trade! I wouldn't wonder if a good many American privateers went into the African fleet as soon as the war's over. The right sort of vessels manned by experienced men. They are all armed, too, and a slaver needs to be a fighter. We could just fill up America with prime workhands. More'n a million of 'em 'll be needed to open up the country and make it rich. That's what will set up the Republic! Dick says he won't go in, but I guess he will. If we can't land cargoes in the United States we can take them to the West Indies or the Brazils. There isn't any limit to the market. I'm going to see, too, if we can't manage it so as not to waste so many of 'em on the v'yges. We've just lost two more and we are treating them first rate."

They were suffering, indeed, from previous bad management and therefore so many more doubloons in human form had gone overboard to the sharks. Fortunate fish, to have fallen in with such a complete shark's commissary as a combination of slaver and pirate!

The other Captain Wilton, the younger, was hardly in as good circumstances or as good spirits concerning his prospects. He was no longer the Commodore of a three-ship squadron. He was only the skipper of a schooner which was in serious difficulties, with more to come. He had before his mind no attractive visions of throngs of black human cattle, to be transmitted into yellow doubloons of gold or heavy pieces of silver. As for paper currency, the full weight of a Congo in Continental paper money would not at that date have purchased him. Sam Green came aft and stood by Dick until no other ears were too near.

"What is it, Sam?" asked Dick.

"Jest this!" growled the mate. "We're to have a brush with that ten-gun feller. It's hard luck, but we may beat him. Now! if worst comes to worst, I want to see you below, if we're both alive. We needn't loose everything. You wait and see."

"We'll fight," began Dick, but a voice forward called for the mate and he stepped away. As he did so a semi-mysterious look vanished from his face and in a moment more he was superintending the long thirty-two.

"She's in range, Cap'n," he shouted. "Shall I let her have it? There, she speaks!"

The white cloud puffing out from the side of the British brig seemed to admit for her that she had no pivot gun.

"Carries heavy metal, though," remarked Sam, "but it fell short."

"Give it to her," shouted the captain. "See if you can knock a stick out of her."

Sam Green was a good gunner and his first shot passed only a little astern of the Englishman. It was a sharp warning to her, but British sailors are hardened against that kind of warning. They are a tough and reckless race of fighters, caring wonderfully little how near an enemy's shot may come without hitting. Their brig steered steadily on, firing again as if in vexation at the short range of her own guns.

"That sixty-pounder ship is showing all the sail she can send up," muttered Dick. "We've only one chance left. If that fellow away to leeward'll keep on his course, we can stay beyond his reach. The corvette's a tub. I don't mind her."

The ten-gun brig however was as fast as the *Montauk* herself and the distance between them lessened as they both went about upon the next tack.

"Struck her," shouted Sam as he saw the

splinters fly from her bulwarks. "Hurrah for the long thirty-two!"

At that instant the Briton let go her whole broadside.

"O, my God!"

There was a loud shriek from among the men and a fierce exclamation broke from Captain Dick as he saw her topmast cut away and knew that the swift *Montauk* was crippled. So far as the English brig was concerned this was of small importance, for in a minute more she was without a mainmast, and Sam Green and his men were blazing away like mad.

"Stop firing!" shouted Dick. "We are leaving her. All hands to clear away. It's the sixty-gun ship now."

"One more pill?" asked Sam.

"Not a shot," said Dick. "Who's hurt?"

"Pepperell and Rogers are dead as mackerel, Cap'n," said a sailor, sadly. "Some few splinter hurts, too, but not bad ones."

"We won't run the risk of a broadside from a heavy cruiser," said Dick, "but the day's going now. We may keep out o' reach of her guns till dark."

"Hardly," growled Sam Green. "We needed every rag of sail. We'd been a'most safe if it hadn't been for the topmast."

They were anything but safe now. A stern chase is proverbially a long one, and this might have been securely longer but for that other peril away to the northwestward. It had drawn perceptibly nearer, too, without seeming to change its course.

"I've made her out at last," growled Dick as he lowered his telescope. "She's a seventy-four. They are all good sailors. Heavy guns, too!"

"The firin' must ha' signalled her," said the mate, "but she' a keepin' right on. What does she mean?"

"It's her Captain's good judgment," said Dick. "They're making a three-cornered trap for us. He's a bright one."

Tenaciously, through an hour or so after that, the *Montauk* did her best. She did very well, too, considering her lost spar, but all the while, larger, loftier, nearer, loomed up the vast, white spread of the sixty-guns ship's canvas.

"It's of no use, Dick," said Sam at last. "It's time for you and me to go below for a bit. Poor Tom Pepperell!"

As he said that, he stooped over the rail of a boat on the deck. He took out a white silk handkerchief and a strip of cotton cloth which Dick had seen him dip in the blood of their slain shipmate.

"What are they for?" asked Dick.

"Bandages for wounded arms," replied Sam. "Come along."

In a few minutes more they were down in the cabin and Sam was holding out something as he said hurriedly:

"Strip your arm. Cover that up under the bloody bandage. They'll search every man from head to foot, but they won't pry into a fresh wound, like ours. That thing is yours and I've another like it. We may manage to hold on to 'em."

The small oil-skin pads which had been taken from Captain Araga might be worth keeping. One was quickly bound on over a slash which Sam had actually received in the fight with the pirates. When Dick was provided with the other pad the two bandaged limbs did not look too much alike. It was not at all remarkable that both of them had been slashed while leading their men in battle. Both bandages were very bloody, however, almost too much so.

The crew were waiting anxiously when their captain came on deck.

"She's a'most within range, sir," said one of them. "There goes a gun!"

"Men," responded Dick, "we have done all we could."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"One broadside from that fellow would sink us. We must surrender."

"Aye, aye, sir! No blame to you."

"Heave to, then, Sam! Haul down the flag? O, but this is hard!"

His face was white for a moment, then his color came again and he said under his breath:

"I must do what I can for the men, whatever becomes of me. They may shoot me on the spot—"

"I know her," said Sam, at that moment. It's the *Ascalon*, sixty. She's heavin' to, to lower a boat. Our time's come. Hold steady, now. Be keerful what you say when they come on board."

"Aye, aye, sir!" came back to him. "Some of us is pretty good at lyin', too, if them there Britishers want some."

They were courageous even in their hour of disaster. A boat from the *Ascalon* came alongside and a British lieutenant stepped on board, followed by a dozen armed seamen. His face as he glanced around him wore an expression of triumphant satisfaction.

"Who commands this pirate? he asked.

"I am Captain Richard Wilton, commander of the United States privateer *Montauk*," was the

steady-voiced response. "My father, formerly in command of her, sailed away in a pirate schooner, fought with and captured yesterday."

Formal, stiffly so, but polite was the speech and manner of Dick. Rough, coarse, brutal was the rejoinder of the British officer.

"Bos'n," he said, "put him in irons. Who's next in command?"

"I'm mate of the *Montauk*," said Sam.

"Iron him, too," commanded the man in power. "Now, Wilton, I'm Lieutenant Gregg of the *Ascalon*. You are found capturing British merchantmen after the signing of the treaty of peace between England and the rebels. You are taken as a pirate; you will be tried and convicted as a pirate, and you will be hanged as a pirate. So will your father, if we catch him, and I believe we shall. Mackenzie, take these two on board the *Ascalon*. Report to Captain Vaile as to orders for the rest."

"No peace had been declared when the *Montauk* sailed," said Dick. "I do not know, now, that any treaty has been signed. I am no pirate. My men are American sailors."

Bitterly profane was Lieutenant Gregg's interruption. He closed with:

"Shut your jaw, now, you buccaneer! I'll go

to see you hung myself. We ought to hang every Yankee privateer we can lay hands on. Jerk 'em along, Mackenzie. Captain Vaile will know what to do with 'em. Move, now! You gallows-birds!"

The midshipman in charge of them and the boat was a bright young fellow. He was not needlessly rough in discharge of his duty, but the lieutenant turned away to inspect and curse the angry looking sailors of the *Montauk*.

Dick followed Sam over the side and down into the boat in silence, for there was a surging at his heart and a redhot feeling in his brain. Then, as the rowers cast loose and were pulling away he arose to his feet and shouted:

"Good-bye, boys! Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes! Hurrah for the United States of America! Hurrah for George Washington!"

"Knock him down!" roared Gregg, while the *Montauk* seamen burst out with all their lung power in response to their brave young captain.

Moreover, through their cheering there came to the ears of the lieutenant a fiercely revengeful curse upon "all British pirates, afloat and ashore, from the King down."

"Shoot that mutineer!" he shouted, but no man on board the *Montauk* could point out the right man to shoot.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN IRONS.

GREAT was the excitement and deep the anxiety among the dames of New York who were honored with invitations to the exclusive ball in honor of the Admiral. Madeline Montanye was no exception to the rule and she never before had taken so deep an interest in shops and shopping. Mrs. Wilton, however, was not only a woman of good judgment in such matters, but had acquired skill in long years of practice for herself and Madeline and friends, when professional dressmakers were few on Manhattan Island. Something like haste was involved, since there was to be only one short week in which to ponder and prepare.

Leaving all these important affairs behind him, Sassago had passed beyond the British lines before noon of the day upon which he started. North of the Harlem river lay a region which had been debatable ground during almost the entire war. There were roads through it of which no peaceful uses had been made for many a day. They were traveled only by scouting parties of

either army or by the Whig and Tory guerrillas, known as cowboys and skinners.

Not upon any of these dangerous thoroughfares, however, could the old Pequot have been found. Through lowland and highland he had trapped, fished, hunted, in days gone by, and he made remarks now, as he went, concerning other errands which had led him hitherward from time to time. He was not journeying safely now.

"Lobster call old Pequot spy," said he. "Hang him on tree. Hang Kruger. Hang Montanye. No hang Gen'al Wassin'ton. No catch him."

He seemed somewhat disposed to soliloquize. He was standing among thickly grown cedars on the crest of a hill and he was looking downward on the wind-swept ice of a lake of moderate extent.

"Ugh!" he said. "Old Pequot 'calp one lobster down by pond. No keep 'calp. Take 'em an' lose 'em. He got in Sassago way. Kill him! Up on hill 'cross pond. Gen'al Wassin'ton men kill lobster all one day. Good fight no 'calp 'em."

There had been many a fight in what is now Westchester county. Some of them which are hardly mentioned in history had been bloody enough. The old Pequot seemed to know a great deal about the skirmishes, large and small, and he

also knew of military outposts to be avoided. He was in less danger than if active hostilities were going on, but he would have been called to sharp account if met by British or Hessian patrols. It was in fact a dangerous country in which to be met by any body at all.

Sassago was no longer unarmed. From some hidden crypt of his own among the woods, he had taken and was now carrying a very good rifle, with powder horn and bullet pouch. Allowing him to make pretty good time, he would require perhaps about two days to go and as many more to return and in the meantime he would hardly be missed by anybody outside of the Montanye family. His absence was known, indeed, by old Mr. Kruger, the merchant, for the fact was mentioned to him by Dr. Montanye during the conversation they had concerning the important question of the future supply of human labor for the United States and other countries. There would be great need, they agreed, for bones and muscles for men of brains and education and social standing to supervise, employ and direct. Labor itself, with whatever form of human life or soul might be attached to it, was to be accounted as but a merchantable commodity.

Among the snow covered streets and squares

of New York and the ragged hills of Westchester, the day waned slowly, while far away to the Southeastward, the British sixty-gun ship, the *Ascalon*, rose and fell upon the Atlantic billows. Upon her quarterdeck stood several officers, one of whom was marked by his uniform as the Captain. Near them, a little receded, were several well-dressed women. In front of them stood two stalwart, sailor-like men, evidently not common seamen, on whose wrists were manacles, although each of them had his left arm in a sling.

Captain Vaile looked every inch a British naval officer, conscious that he was autocrat of the ship which he commanded. He was a little too burly for duty aloft, but he was perfection in figure and manner for the lord of a quarter-deck. Haughty as were his eyes, however, the young man in front of him sent back a glance as proud and utterly unflinching, for Richard Wilton's blood was up. He had lost his ship, but he had not lost his manhood.

Midshipman Mackenzie, a fine young fellow, with a bearing that was aristocratic as well as sailorly, had finished his report and Captain Vaile's first remark related to it.

"Forty prime seaman, eh? Pirates? Yankee privateer pirates. Just what we needed. Every

ship is short of hands. I'll keep a score of 'em in the *Ascalon*. Valuable prizes. A successful pirate—" and he chuckled humorously in his lordly way.

"Captain and mate of the *Montauk*," had been Mackenzie's report, and he added: "The mate was wounded in their fight with the Spanish piccaroon, Captain Wilton by a splinter to-day. It was by a shot from the Griffin."

"Captain Wilton," exclaimed the British commander, scornfully, "Captain Gibbet-bird! Have they been searched? If not—"

"Thoroughly searched, your honor," responded the boatswain behind Mackenzie. "Lieutenant Gregg attended to that. He told me to say he had a special report of his own to make, sir."

"Now, my man," said the captain, ferociously, "I will teach you a lesson!"

"I am a prisoner of war, Captain Vaile," said Dick, firmly. "So is Mr. Green. We demand right treatment. You can not and shall not impress our men. They are Americans, every one. They are prisoners of war."

"Lawful subjects of His Majesty, King George the Third," sneered Captain Vaile, "and he shall have their service."

"Thank God, sir," sternly responded Dick. "George the Third has no longer any subjects in the United States. We have won our freedom! We shall keep it, too! I forbid you to impress my men!"

"You forbid? You buccaneer, with a rope around your neck! Take them below! Separate them! Keep them in irons! Give them a rope's end if they open their dirty mouths! Rebels! Pirates!"

"Captain Vaile?"

The best-looking woman on board, though elderly, had nervously drawn nearer and something had angered her for her face and voice said so.

"Captain Vaile?" she repeated. "That man fought and beat the Spanish pirates. He saved us all, sir. We were treated well by him and by his father. He is a gentleman—"

"Madame," interrupted the captain. "I am glad the Yankee pirates used up the Spanish pirates. They can hang, all the same. But I can not be interfered with on my own quarter-deck, not even by Mrs. Campbell!"

"I will speak!" she said and the Scotch accent did not detract from the resentful energy in her tone. "I will speak to my husband, too,

as soon as we get to New York. I will speak to Sir Guy."

"This is a naval affair," said the captain. "The army will not meddle with it. I am sorry to be compelled to tell you so, but you yourself must not meddle!"

"I am sorry I did, then!" she sharply answered him. "Colonel Campbell shall hear of this and of some other things!"

Here was a touch of mutiny that he was entirely unprepared for and she turned from him and swept dignifiedly away.

"She did it, fine," said Sam Green, as he and Dick were led aft to be taken below. "She didn't help us, but she is the right kind of a woman. I'm afraid it'll be long before I see Sally. It won't be worth their while to hang me. They'd best not 'press me, either—"

Then he became as silent as Dick, for it flashed into Sam's mind that the piracy case against the captain of the *Montauk* was more dangerous than against any other man who had been found on board of her. Moreover a curious feature of the case was that the manner and action of Captain Vaile were strictly justifiable, according to existing naval usages, and, very nearly by maritime law and treaties.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHARK-JAW PASS.

"RIGGING" is a somewhat technical term capable of varied applications. "Outfit" is another chameleon-like verbalism.

While Madeline and Mrs. Wilton were so deeply ingrossed by their preparations for the ball, their rigging or their outfit, Mrs. Wilton's husband was giving more painful, and careful attention to the rigging and outfit of the beautiful vessel which he had won at so great a cost from her former crew and owners. So was the prime seaman Cornelius Devoort, of Manhattan Island, who was now acting as her first mate and who had, with the Captain, inspected every corner of her hull, every stick of her spars, every rope and every rag of her canvas.

"She can get away from almost anything else afloat," remarked Devoort to her commander, a little after mid-day. "I wish I could be sure the old *Montauk* is as safe as we are."

"She may be a reef or so safer," soberly responded the Captain. "Dick is well on his way to the Capes and we are here. I tell you what, though, Devoort, this craft is just the clipper for

the trade we are in. It's as if she was made for it. I've been studying."

"So have I," said the mate. "It'll be a sure thing as soon as the war's really over. The first p'int is to get in with this cargo. It's a long reach now to the Wind'ard Islands. I've been there."

"So have I," said Captain Wilton. I got my first sea training in the West India trade. I shouldn't wonder if we had a bit of ticklish navigation ahead."

"Look a' here," inquired the mate, "I want to know—do you know what they call the Shark-jaw passage?"

"Well, I do," replied the captain, "and that's just what it is, for a man that doesn't know his way in. But what I was thinking of is the trade. No slow boat has any business in it. She would lose more niggers on the way!"

"That's so," said Devoort, thoughtfully. "That's where the losses come in."

"You see," continued the captain, "it won't do to let your hold get too foul and bad. Air, you know, and all that. The critters mustn't be stinted about water, either, nor provisions. I'd spend lemons and rum and sugar and pancakes, before I'd throw away good stock."

"So would I," exclaimed Devoort. "Some narrer-minded fellers'd save a dollar's wu'th o' feed and waste gold doubloons by it. It ain't any kind o' 'conomy. I'm for feedin' on 'em well."

"So am I," said the captain with energy "I'd bring sick Congos on deck and do all I could to keep 'em."

All the while, if any man had been listening over the hatchway of the between-decks, he would have heard the same old chorus of groans and shouts and exclamations. There were also barbaric monotones or recitations which sounded like some kind of song.

If the listener had then gone down, however, he would have discovered that Captain Wilton as an enlightened and progressive slave merchant, had indeed instituted desirable reforms. The black property in that hold was better cared for than before and had a much better chance for reaching the end of its voyage alive, if not also in pretty good condition. Not one dollar's worth of human life was to be wasted if its owners could prevent it.

The captain on deck was proceeding to explain to the mate a plan he had for shortening the African trip and possibly avoiding the destruc-

tive calms, when the lookout aloft sent down a lusty-throated:

"Sail to wind'ard!"

"Where away?" shouted back the captain, and up came his telescope to seek an answer to his question.

Devoort was also plying his glass.

"No merchantmen around here, it's likely," he grumbled. "If it's any kind o' cruiser, he'll make for us, sure!"

"Of course he will," said the captain.

"The weather looks a little doubtful, too," returned the mate.

"No—it doesn't," said the captain with his telescope still at work. "If any thing is certain, just now, it's weather a coming and plenty of it. Mark that sky, eh?"

Devoort nodded and said nothing. The heat had been increasing and what wind there was came fitfully. The barometer in the cabin was going sulkily down. The sky to windward had seemed to have a threat in it, even before the top-sails of the stranger showed against it.

"She's a three master, captain," said Devoort shortly. "I shouldn't wonder if she's a corvette."

"I don't care if she's a ship o' the line, replied the captain. "I won't change our course a hair.

It may bring us nearer her, but we needn't mind that, unless she has a West India pilot on board."

"If she hasn't," growled the mate, "she may find out how that passage got its name. We can make it before sundown."

"Look!" sharply exclaimed the captain, "the wind's coming. All hands! Shorten sail! Quick time, now, boys!"

A schooner, properly handled, can meet a squall better than can a square rigged vessel. She can take in her canvas more rapidly, but Captain Wilton was having as much of his "duck" spread as he dared and so, his glass told him, was the square-rigged stranger.

Already far to leeward could be discovered breaks in the horizon which told of land in that direction and this must be the islands with their outlaying reefs. The course which the *Douglas* was running would surely bring her between the stranger and all the perils of the lee shore, yet she hardly changed a point as she sped onward.

"Corvette, sir!" called out a forward lookout. "British flag, sir! She's close reefed, but she's got the wind with her."

"We're under all the sail we can bear," exclaimed mate Devoort.

"Too much!" shouted back the captain. "In

with everything but the sprit-sail! Here's the squall!"

It had, indeed, already reached the corvette, but there was no fault to be found with the perfect seamanship of her management and handling. The burst of wind which had struck her did but send her faster through the water. She was doing quite as well, to say the least, as was the schooner, and the distance between them was perceptibly diminishing at a dangerous rate. Time went by, they hardly knew how much, and all the while the captain's glass was aimed landward more anxiously than even towards the cruiser which carried the dreaded flag of England.

"There it is, Devoort," he said at last, pointing at a long line of breakers not more than two miles ahead. "I know it. That's the upper jaw of the shark!"

"There's a good deal of it," replied the mate, "and there's a shoal that runs away out beyond the p'int of it. If we can round that without grazing, we're a'most safe. The lower jaw, beyond, doesn't come out so far."

"Yes," said the captain, "but there's only a couple o' hundred fathoms width to the passage, after you find it. Going through isn't exactly straight sailing, either."

"This 'ere's gettin' to be pretty nigh a young hurricane," muttered the mate, for the *Douglas* was leaning over to her rail and the sea was rising terrifically. "She is nearin' us, too. It's a close shave—"

The report of a gun punctuated the mate's assertion, but the shot went high over the schooner. It was no time for good marksmanship.

"The jaw, Devoort!" roared Captain Wilton, through his trumpet. "Come about! We have passed the Shark's nose. She can stand it."

A good seaboat was the schooner, for she did stand it, spinning about until her nose was pointed toward the low-lying land on the shore of which the white breakers were dashing high.

An officer on the deck of the corvette was at that moment saying:

"Does the skipper of the schooner mean to beach her? Hard a—starboard! Come about! Give 'em a broadside! It's of no use. We can't follow her."

It was, in part, an order he should have given sooner. He would have done so if he had known of the hidden reef outlying beyond these nearer breakers, the upper jaw of the Shark—or if he had known that the deeper draught of his gallant war-

ship forbade her venturing where such a boat as the *Douglas* might pass in safety.

The broadside was fired. The range and aim were good enough, but this was no time to run out guns. There was a sudden burst of the hurricane, tearing sails from their boltropes and making ribbons of the red cross flag.

The roar of the cannon mingled with the roar of the storm in a weird, tremendous crash of sound. Then followed another crash; the shouts and screams of men; the cracking of spars as the mast of the corvette went by the board; the cracking of timbers as the hull came plunging down upon the hidden reef and a vast surge of the sea broke clear over her.

"Not a shot touched us, Captain," said mate Devoort.

The schooner was flying along over comparatively quiet waters, protected from the force of the wind by the very reef on which the unfortunate cruiser had cast herself away.

"We couldn't go about," said the captain. "O! How I want to help them! This is a terrible thing to see! My God! Is there nothing!"

"Not in this hurricane," said Devoort, grimly. "We can't save a soul of 'em. She'll go to pieces in no time."

"Devoort," said the captain, as the schooner sped away. "I wish they hadn't fired, somehow. If that broadside had hit us, it would ha' sunk us. They let drive just as she heeled over."

"We needn't report her," said the mate. "All they'll know is that she sailed and was never heard from. We don't even know her name—We're in the Shark Jaw Pass!"

"Safe!" shouted the captain. "Now for Puenta Maria, and then for Havana, and then for home!"

CHAPTER XIX.

SASSAGO'S PASSPORT.

THERE was no need for a ferryboat at Newburg on the Hudson in the midwinter of 1783. The ice was solid from shore to shore. The main camp of Washington's army was on the westerly side and camp discipline was maintained among all the comfortless huts where the heroes who had won the liberty of America were silently suffering. So it was among the ragged regiments whose quarters were on the eastern bank. Nevertheless, passwords and countersigns were not as rigidly demanded as they would have been during active hostilities. The sentries were posted as usual and forms were observed, but that was about all, for the war-worn troops were sick at heart. Many of them were sick in body as well as in mind and all of them were short of provisions.

Sassago brought a perfectly good passport with him when he emerged from the woods and confronted a patrol, a squad of veterans from the Connecticut line. In fact, he was dragging his passport behind him. It consisted of an im-

provised sled made of a forked tree-branch, on which other sticks had been fastened and upon these lay the carcass of a fine, fat buck.

"Old Pequot feed old Gen'al Wassin'ton," he said. "Make him feel good. Sojer no 'top him!"

They did not stop him. On the contrary, he had help at once, and a more serviceable sled hauled across the Hudson his tribute to the beloved Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the Republic.

It was not yet dark when he stood in a large room, once a parlor, but now the business office of Washington's headquarters at Newburg. There was a fire blazing in the ample fire-place, but the lamp on the table was not yet lighted and the room would have been gloomy but for the fire-light.

In the ruddy glow, between the fire and the long table in the middle of the room, stood the tall and stately form of the greatest man in American history. In the coming time there was to be but one other fit to stand beside him; Lincoln, the second liberator and preserver of the Republic.

Before the General, looking up into his face with a queer expression of mingled awe and

childlike confidence, stood the Pequot slave of Rev. Dr. Peter Montanye, of New York.

"Well, Sassago, what now?" inquired the General, speaking as if he knew him.

The Pequot drew out the long envelopes from the bosom of his buckskins and delivered them, one at a time.

"Old Kruger," he said, with the first. "Old Montanye," was added, with emphasis, as he handed out the second. "All paper very bad! Sassago bring 'em to Gen'al Wassin'ton t'rough woods."

Washington took the envelopes and opened them. He read during three long minutes, in silence, while the Indian watched intently his flushed and then pallid face. He did not go on with his reading for he comprehended that the messenger had something more to say.

"What is it, Sassago?" he asked.

"Heap ship come," replied the Pequot. "Gen'al Howe—Gen'al Guy. Heap scared. Feel very bad. Say go home. Old Pequot no want 'em to get away. Want Gen'al Wassin'ton come 'calp 'em all."

There was no smile upon the lips of the general, but there was a faint glimmer of one in his weary eyes.

"Scalp them all?" he said. "Before they get away?—Smallwood? Here! A preliminary treaty of peace has been signed. Wait, Sassago!"

An officer in a general's uniform who was standing near him took one of the papers while Washington looked again at another, his face brightening more and more as he did so.

"Trumbull!" he exclaimed. "This is the beginning of the end! Thank God!"

Sassago had brought the first news of the peace and with it much more information of value to the Commander-in-Chief, if not—as he said to his staff—to the Continental Congress, also.

"Take good care of Sassago," he began to say to an orderly, but the Pequot shook his head.

"Ugh! No want 'em," he grunted. "Old Pequot take care. Go home, now. No 'tay in camp. Want Wassin'ton men come 'calp lobster. No let 'em get away on ship. Come shoot! Come kill!"

There was a fearfully vindictive look on his dark face. He was aware that the British were beaten, but that was not enough for him. No adequate revenge had been taken and their peaceful departure was no satisfaction to an Indian. At the same time, whether they knew it or not he was as keenly conscious of the grim humor, the

half fun, hidden under his absurd demand, as were the officers who were laughing at it.

"Sassago bring deer," he added. "Feed up Wassin'ton. Make him feel good, so he come 'calp lobster."

"Go, now, Sassago," said the general, kindly enough, but without any sign of a laugh. "You will see us there before long. I hope that all the scalping and all the shooting are over."

The Pequot knew enough to go at once and as he passed from the room an aide said to him:

"You may have something to carry with you."

"No! He will not," came promptly from the general himself. "There must be no needless risk incurred. He and his friends have done enough all through the war. God bless them!"

"Old Pequot feel heap good," exclaimed Sassago. "Bring paper. Bring deer. Look in old Wassin'ton face again! Ugh!"

It was evident that Dr. Montanye had good reasons for cultivating, as he did, such friendly relations with the British officers in New York. Also for Mr. Kruger's dealings of several kinds, and for Sassago's willingness to catch fish for headquarters messes and to obtain the freedom of the army lines. On the other hand, he had

been an altogether unsuspected fisherman for Washington.

It was not an unpleasant winter's night along the Hudson—not even dark. It was very dark, however, in the narrow den assigned to such a culprit as Richard Wilton on board the *Ascalon*. It was a place into which not a great deal of light might enter, even at mid-day. Of course, it was fairly clean, for the discipline of a man-of-war required that, but no naval regulations provided for fresh air or any kind of comfort.

Dick lay there, heavy with fetters and heavy at heart, when the door of his prison cell swung open, a lantern was lighted so that its light fell upon him, and a gruff voice said to him:

"Ship's surgeon. Show me your arm!"

Strictly professional was the manner in which the bandages were removed. No "pad" was there now to be uncovered. Dick had cared for that, although he had no light to inspect it by, if he had wished to do so—and he had not. A pretty deep and freshly made flesh wound was found, however, and the surgeon attended to it with skilled rapidity.

"He will be fit for service in ten days," he remarked. "Nothing but a clean cut. Put on the irons!"

He was gone and with him went the light, but Dick expressed his view of the matter somewhat curiously.

"I did not make enough of a cut," he said. "I wasn't half sure about it and the knife was as dull as a hoe. It's as good a hiding place as ever, though, for a few days. I won't let them get that thing, not if they hang me—whatever it is. I'll throw it overboard before they shall get it."

They now had everything else which had been in his cabin or elsewhere on board the *Montauk.* At that very hour Captain Vaile and another officer were in the captain's cabin, poring over the papers which they had captured. They were just now reading Captain Wilton's log.

"What? Gregg! Read this entry! It's almost the last one made. It is in the younger Wilton's handwriting."

Lieutenant Gregg read aloud:

"The pirate slaver *Leon,* captured as above, was formerly the British privateer *Douglas.* Her papers are now in the hands of Captain Mark Wilton, in command of her, sailed for Havana."

"Gregg," said Captain Vaile, "not a word of this to a living soul! I must trace that fellow. I know who fitted out and commanded the *Douglas!*"

"Ah? Strange business! But what about this younger Wilton?" asked Gregg.

"His papers are sufficiently regular," said Captain Vaile. "I shall report the matter to Admiral Digby when we reach New York. A pirate he is, however. There hasn't been one-half the hanging done that there should have been. A little rope well used at the outset of the war might have prevented—"

"I don't know," exclaimed the lieutenant. "The land forces tried it. The rope that swung that fellow Nathan Hale was used over again for poor Major André. The Yankees have long memories."

"We shall teach them some additional lessons, I think, before we are done with them," growled the captain. "For the present this affair will have to rest."

CHAPTER XX.

A CHANGE OF CARGO.

THE land-locked cove behind the Puenta Santa Maria had several advantages. It was a good harbor, for a small one; it was accessible from the interior and it was peculiarly retired, so to speak. For all these reasons it possessed a commerce of its own of an intermittent character.

The trade in Africans had in former days been considered reputable. Cargoes of them had been openly landed in New York, for instance, while that port was Dutch and afterwards when it had become English. The same was true of almost any other considerable port of entry in either North or South America. Even now, it was not the semi-human character of their freight which inclined slave merchants to prefer other harbors than those of the United States. It was partly an increasing adverse public sentiment among American citizens generally, contrasted with a hearty co-operation among either Spaniards or Portuguese. Possibly the greatest remaining drawbacks were in high import duties to be paid, per head, and the continual necessity for com-

promising these, expensively, with custom house or naval officials. Moreover, there are times and circumstances when very enterprising men become averse to answering over-numerous questionings.

Captain Araga would have brought his goods to this very cove had he been permitted to do so, and now, toward the close of a pleasant afternoon, the very watchful eyes of professional observers on the shore discovered in the offing the sails which he had intended to furl there. They saw, with much curiosity, a schooner which at first flew the flag of Great Britain, and then, as it came shoreward, pulled down that banner and sent up the bunting of the United States. So far as their individual feelings were concerned, they may have cared little if there the Skull and Cross-bones had been substituted for either of these, for either flag might promise with equal certainty a full collection, or distribution of the regular or irregular tariff imposed upon the landing of human labor consignments. Whatever were the sums supposed to reach, finally, the Spanish government coffers, the local officials were reputed to be capable of exercising a wide discretion in the discharge of their duties.

Captain Mark Wilton was fully aware of these

points when he dropped anchor and he came on deck with cash in his pockets, remarking:

"I will collect in Spanish doubloons, but I had better pay out these English guineas and sovreigns. I don't care to have so much British gold on board."

The first Spaniard who came over the rail was ready to assist him in carrying out his views, and he carried away guineas.

The mere landing the cargo was to be a simple process for there were ready buyers at hand, both planters and traders. It was evident that the demands of the market were ample. Nevertheless it appeared that not one black "piece" was to remain in the barracks at the cove, for there was a suggestion made as to higher and costlier officials who might shortly come with an unpleasant disposition to investigate and make trouble.

As many blacks as possible were boated ashore that night and safely scattered hither and thither in the interior. The remainder were out of the hold before noon of the following day. All the while, Captain Wilton and Mate Devoort were learning a great deal for future use concerning the great and profitable business which they proposed going into. The costliest part of their

present experience related to the doubtful character of their ship's papers, but all that difficulty was skillfully overcome. Then the sign painters of the schooner's crew had to get out their brushes again, as there were many British cruisers among the West Indies. When their work was done, the America schooner *Sumter* and not the British *Douglas* was to sail for Havana after unloading.

"We'll have to pay smart money again, after we get there," said Captain Wilton to his mate, "but it's our only chance. We'll load for home with sugar. It's all ready there to come on board and we'll pay for it in anything but those doubloons. I'll tell you what, though, I shan't bring my next cargo to this place. I'd rather try Porto Rico or Mexico, or South America. These chaps know too much and they might set a trap for us."

"I'm thinking," responded Devoort, "that it's goin' to be a good while before the seas are really safe for our flag. It's a new comer, anyhow, and we'll find that the British haven't completely let go of us yet."

"That's so," said the captain. "I believe we shall be safer in running to and from the slave-coast than we would in trading to any port in Europe."

The two sailors were but discerning a very mischievous point of the situation. It was thirty years more before Great Britain finally "let go," at the end of another bloody war. During all those years the slave trade prospered, also, but not between African ports and those of the United States. Among these and through all the country they belonged to, the public sentiment, which at that early day forbade further African importations, grew stronger, year after year, until it brought on, in 1861, a far bloodier struggle than the Sailor's Rights war of 1812-14.

The schooner, her new name fitting her as well as *Douglas* or *Leon*, may not have been the first American slaver after the war for independence. The captain believed that she was, however, and he congratulated himself upon being "in at the beginning," with no idea whatever of what the end might be.

"The *Montauk*, too," he more than once remarked of her, "is just built for it. Dick can run her with Sam Green for mate, and we're bound to make money. This first luck of ours is going to set us up in New York."

Alas, for human calculations! Dick Wilton's first luck had not set him up at all. It had locked him up in a dark hole in the *Ascalon*, and the

Montauk was now sailing for New York with a British prize crew on board.

The next day was quiet with a fair wind, and the night that followed it was not only quiet but very dark. The following morning the Commander of the British Frigate *Windsor*, anchored in the harbor of Havana, discovered an American flag fluttering from the rigging of a schooner that was moored at one of the wharves. She was a new arrival, he was sure, but already she was taking on many bales of tobacco and hogsheads of sugar. He could not have imagined what work had been required to purge some parts of her hold for the reception of ordinary merchandise.

"We can't make prize of her just now," he quietly remarked. "We can't even make her show her papers in a Spanish port, but we can watch her and we can 'press a good lot of hands out of her before she gets away."

Captain Wilton was well aware that he could and expected him to attempt it.

"He won't while we're here at the wharf," said mate Devoort. "But I'm a'most ready to give 'em a special chance to send a boat's crew on board of us. What do you say?"

"Trap 'em eh?" said Captain Wilton. "I'm with you! I'm ready for anything but to show 'em

our papers. My soul! What those things are costing us! such as they are. It is well for us that Araga provided us with our expense-money. The niggers would have been all used up. I've had to pay round prices for sugar, too, but I did better on tobacco."

He was a good buyer, but the sugar dealers had received hints in advance and he could not help himself. That is, he could not obtain lower prices, but he could take in his cargo with feverish rapidity and he could rigidly prevent any suspicious persons from getting on board to inspect the *Sumter* for the benefit of the British Captain.

Another and another of King George's cruisers sailed in. One was a ship of the line and they all were short of sailors. There was likely to be even a kind of competition for a chance to send a press gang to the "Yankee sugar boat," as they called it, and Captain Wilton, very stupidly in their opinion, gave them the very opportunity that they would have asked for.

When his cargo was in he did but cast off from the wharf and slip away to an anchorage as far as he might from either of the Englishmen. That was in broad day, and they said, at once:

"The blockhead! But then he knows we'd follow if he sailed now. He'll try to get away to-

night. Let him. His schooner may go. What we want is his crew; not his boat or the sugar."

The *Sumter* was still under Spanish protection, whatever that might be worth. There she lay, her sails all ready to spread at short warning: her cable ready to slip; a small boat dangling at the davits, ready to lower; not a man visible, but every man on board of her ready and waiting—for something.

"Coming!" exclaimed Captain Wilton, not more than an hour after darkness settled over the face of the sea. "They've muffled their oars. Hark!"

"If the frigate, or one of 'em hasn't sent its longboat!" responded Devoort. "It'll be a strong crew. They counted on a surprise."

"I guess it'll be one," growled an old privateersman, as he cowered behind a bulwark, with something round and heavy in his lap.

He was not the only watcher who seemed to be prepared in like manner.

No hail came from the British boat as it swept out of the gloom. It did but pull to the portside of the schooner and as it touched her a grappling iron was thrown to make fast with.

"Board!" was the only order given.

"Now!" shouted Captain Wilton.

Dark figures, his own among them, arose at the bulwark and leaned over.

Crash! crash! crash! the heavy round shot went down through the bottom of the longboat and back dropped all the throwers, leaving no head exposed to be shot at. She filled with terrible rapidity and the men, who sprang at once up the side of the *Sumter*, left muskets and pikes behind them. Only half a dozen succeeded in getting on board and these found themselves confronted by a glittering line of whaling lances. The lieutenant in command of the boat, brave fellow, came over sword in hand, only to be grasped from behind by a pair of iron arms and held hard until a rope took their place.

"Down with the yawl!" shouted Captain Wilton. "Don't let any of 'em drown. How are you, lieutenant, what's your name? Do you want any of my men?"

"I'll have you all hung," roared the angry officer, and he was saying more when he was interrupted by a roar—a derisive roar of Yankee laughter.

"Put us on board the *Windsor!*" he demanded. "If you don't she'll send you to the bottom!"

"O, not quite so bad as that," said Captain

Wilton. "Come, now, we're going to give you a free passage to Baltimore. Besides, I mean to 'press some of your men. Some of 'em may be American subjects."

"Captain Wilton," sang out mate Devoort, at that moment, from the yawl which had been lowered. "I've got 'em all. No drownin' this time."

Every man of them was soon safe on the *Sumter*, dripping and harmless. It was not needful actually to "press" any of them, but no less than five were native born Americans, victims of the British method for obtaining sailors for the King's navy. They now were free again if the schooner they were on could reach a port of their own country.

Her cable was slipped and her sails were spreading. Away she went into the darkness, passing unseen within easy range of the British ship of the line, and then the first American slaver after the war was homeward bound with white captives instead of black on board, and some sugar and tobacco and a crew in uproariously high spirits.

CHAPTER XXI.

A TANGLED INHERITANCE.

ALL the ships which were at sea sailed on toward their intended harbors. So did all the varied events which were to come, and exceedingly varied were the shadows which they might be said to cast before. Among them was the ball in honor of the Admiral, and somehow or other, the invitation list had ceased to be a secret. "Society" knew, now, who were expected and who were not, and there were heart burnings, here and there. More than one critic expressed wonder that the Montanyes had been invited, and an answer had not been altogether lacking or withheld.

"Why!" said one sharp, female tongue, "you Tories have hardly any pretty women, you know, or that can dance well. Besides, old Peter Montanye has been such a staunch friend of General Howe."

No expressions of love for him on that account was added, but the attractiveness of his daughter was freely admitted. It was among another set that the same American woman slyly suggested :

"I don't believe that the Doctor or his British friends know how hotly Madeline hates King George. I hope she'll have a good time at the ball, but her partners won't be dancing with a Tory."

There are often wheels within wheels.

Sassago had only a verbal report to make on his return and part of it had a peculiarly Pequot sound.

"Wassin'ton no let lobster get away," he said. "Come down ribber when ice melt. 'Calp 'em all. Sassago help him."

The North River was as yet hard frozen, but much of the harbor was clear. Only a day or so before the ball, a stately ship came sailing in, accompanied by lighter cruisers and a convoy of merchantmen. One of the convoy, however, was not a trader at all, but a prize which was reported to the Admiral as a Yankee buccaneer.

The first formal report was sent in before Captain Vaile could come on shore to pay his respects in person. It was not an important matter and it had nothing to do with the fact that Major Bedford was so soon on board the *Ascalon*. He came but to see his old friend Vaile and to convey to him an invitation to the ball.

Colonel Campbell, of the Highlanders reached

the ship in the same boat with the Major. When he left it, he was accompanied by his high-spirited wife. She was assisted over the side by the Captain himself, but she seemed only a little mollified with reference to him. She even went so far as to say so, pretty sharply.

"Colonel Campbell," almost merrily responded the Captain, "I think you will have to call me to account. 'Pon my word you will. I'm an awful tyrant on my own ship."

"Only one captain on board at a time, eh?" knowingly returned the colonel. "There is nothing like that in the army."

"I've no fault to find with that," said Mrs. Campbell. "But about those men!"

"It is a peculiar case for a court of inquiry, Colonel," said the sea autocrat. "I'm pretty sure you would agree with me, though."

"They fought the pirates," she said.

"After pirating your own ship," exclaimed Captain Vaile. "Don't I deserve something for not letting them take you to Baltimore?"

"My dear," laughed her husband, "I think he has the advantage of you. You had better go ashore and get ready for the ball."

She went with him, but more than this had been said, and names had been mentioned freely.

Major Bedford himself, going down to the cabin for a jolly talk with the captain, had heard enough to make him fish for more.

"Major," exclaimed his friend, as soon as they were alone, "I'm glad you happened to come right away. I have something to show you—"

"Let's have it," said the Major, and in a moment more he was looking at the entries in Richard Wilton's logbook.

"Well," he said, "what's in it? I was never in the privateering business."

"I may as well out with it, then," responded the captain. "Algernon Bedford did not command the *Douglas* under his own name, at first, but it leaked out afterwards. If he was still in command of her when the Yankees took her—and I suppose he was—then these Wiltons, this man on board and his father, know what became of him."

"My own elder brother!" gasped the Major. "Was he killed?"

"I don't know, positively," said the captain, "but I have that idea. If so, there is hardly a step between you and the House of Lords. The estate is not large, but the title is. Next to you is this young Mackenzie. Some lawyers would say that his claim is almost as good—"

"No, it is not!" broke in the major. "I would take it without question. So would he, however, if I were out of the way. I won't get myself killed for his benefit, though. This is awful about Algernon! What a wild, reckless devil he was! What has been done with this Wilton?"

"Down below, in irons. I call him a pirate, you know."

"He musn't be hanged, and he mustn't get away," said the major, thoughtfully. "He is a witness."

"Or he is not," was the ominous rejoinder of the captain. "We must find out who is—who actually knows what became of your brother."

"Take him to sea with you, anyhow," said the major. "Keep him within call."

"I will, to oblige you," said the captain cheerfully, "but it may become best, altogether to have him hanged."

Down there in his floating dungeon, Richard Wilton was aware that the *Ascalon* had entered the harbor of New York. He was still in irons, but the cut which he had himself made upon his left arm was healing. He no longer was allowed so much bandaging, but no body had, as yet, suspected him of having anything worth concealing. He had even for himself refused to know more

about his oiled silk pad, than that it was as wide as the palm of his hand, almost as thick as his little finger and quite heavy.

"I will open it, some day," he thought, "if I do not have to throw it overboard."

From thinking of that he turned again to think about his mother and his home, so very near, so inaccessible, and to wonder what fortune had followed his father and the *Douglas*. A very sick feeling came, also, when he recalled the many choice things which he had collected to take home with him. "Pretty Madeline Montanye will never see her turquoises!" he said to himself, regretfully.

Strange are circumstances! At that very moment, in the cabin of the *Ascalon*, Captain Vaile was showing the captured jewels to Major Bedford and he had read the superscription which told their destination.

"For Madeline Montanye, eh?" said the major. "I can explain that. By the way, she's almost a blonde and those things will become her, wonderfully well. You will see her at the ball, and you will see Dick Wilton's mother with her. Curious, too, isn't it? They won't know he is here."

"Indeed they will not," laughed the captain. "These are fair war prizes, however. It's the

boy's hard luck. I know a very pretty blonde myself."

"I don't think I shall let pretty Madeline Montanye throw herself away upon any Yankee pirate," chuckled Major Bedford. "I think I have something better than that in store for her."

"My Lady Towton?" laughed the captain. "Are you so far gone as that?"

"Hardly," replied his friend. "But wait till you see her. She is handsome enough to be a countess, that's a fact, but the Towton estates need patching, my boy. The daughter of a colonial clergyman would hardly do. Our ships will sail away from this port, some day."

"And the fairest of America's daughters may wish to take a trip to England?" said the captain. "Well, if the *Ascalon* is here, then, and she may be, you can easily manage to sail home with me, eh?"

"That's the thing," said the major. "I see how it might be done. If I can at all unravel this terrible affair of Algernon's, I could go over and return before the real peace gets here or our forces give up New York. It is the last place that will be surrendered."

"I think so," said the captain. "My boy, I am to dance with la belle Montanye to-morrow night."

"Aye, aye," replied the major. "And now I must go ashore and pay my respects to the Montanye place."

So the future darkened before Richard Wilton and his fetters seemed to be tightening. Perils might also be gathering around the fair head of Madeline. Captain Mark Wilton, also, at this hour, felt as if a dark shadow had fallen over him. True, he had sailed safely past the Capes and up the bay. He had brought the *Sumter*, after all her hair-breadth escapes, triumphantly to her wharf in Baltimore. She was now discharging her cargo, with a ready sale for all of it. Her crew were rejoicing over their shares, for their commander had dealt fairly with every man of them, but he had sought in vain for any tidings of the *Montauk*.

"God pity Dick's mother!" he had groaned, aloud. "Who cares for the ship and cargo! What will she say when she hears that he is either dead or in a British prison?"

CHAPTER XXII.

A CAT OF NINE TAILS.

THE Rev. Dr. Peter Montanye was a capable and thoughtful man. Long habit had made a kind of second nature with him to obtain all the news that was going. He learned, without special effort to do so, the names and character of all vessels arriving. He knew, therefore, that a schooner named the *Montauk*, a prize privateer, was in port and that her Yankee commander had borne the name of Richard Wilton. Nevertheless nothing in his face indicated that he had any ax to grind with the British navy when he met his friend, Major Bedford, on the wharf, as the latter was returning from his visit to Captain Vaile.

"The *Ascalon* was long at sea, eh?" was one of the kindly half questions. "Now would the Captain's mess like fresh fish after their sea rations? Sassago had good luck, last night."

"Just the thing," exclaimed the Major. "I'd be obliged if you would send him some."

"I will have Sassago take them on board himself, then," said the doctor. "Please write him a pass to get to the ship. No trouble to you, you know."

"You are always considerate, Doctor," said the Major as he penciled a few lines on a card. "Sassago's a trump."

So did that red man consider himself, but his dark face lighted up with a peculiar expression when, an hour or so later, he was listening to Doctor Montanye.

"Ugh!" he said. "Good. Sassago see. Go find out. Take heap fish."

"Mrs. Wilton must not know, nor my daughter," said the Doctor. "Not yet."

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, and he went away with a forward slouch and a stealthy panther-like step, as if he were following game or an enemy.

The *Ascalon* was moored in the upper bay, and boats were allowed, now it was in a manner peace, to approach any ship more freely than in former days. Before the middle of that afternoon, a punt rowed by two black men and carrying one passenger only less dark than themselves pulled to the side of the *Ascalon* and the hail which greeted her was answered by:

"Fish for the Cap'n's mess."

"Hand 'em aboard!"

"No! no han' 'em. Tell Cap'n old Pequot hab Major Bedford card. Tell him Sassago come see cap'n."

He did deliver both the fish and the card but he came over the rail and followed in person, unhindered, to the very quarter-deck. He did not at all seem to comprehend certain unusual preparations which he saw making, as he went, but he had really arrived as a sort of brief interruption of naval judicial proceedings. A little earlier, Captain Vaile had stood very near the spot upon which he was now standing and before him was brought a man in irons, from some place below decks. Brief, indeed, were any preliminary remarks that were made before the prisoner heard the order:

"Take off his irons!"

The manacles and fetters were promptly removed and the captain continued:

"You will now go to duty. Were you present at the fight with the *Leon?*"

"Aye, sir. We took her."

"Do you know whether or not her captain and crew escaped?"

"They did not."

"What became of them?"

"Captain Wilton sailed for Havana. That's all I know."

"Was the captain of the *Leon* killed in the fight with the *Montauk?*"

"No."

"Where is he now?"

"Ask Captain Mark Wilton. I've no more to say."

There had been anything but respectfulness in the prisoner's voice and manner, but Captain Vaile had not seemed to be ruffled. He even turned away readily to peruse the card handed him and to inspect the very fine mess of fish.

"Major Bedford. Old Montanye send fish. Old Pequot catch 'em for Cap'n."

Captain Vaile scratched his acknowledgment upon one of his own cards before he pleasantly inquired:

"You are a slave of Dr. Montanye?"

"Ugh! No!" said Sassago, good humoredly but firmly. "No slabe. Old Pequot belong to Miss Montanye. Catch fish for Gen'al Howe, Gen'al Guy. All big red coat eat heap fish. Ugh! Now tell him. Cap'n Vaile want deer?"

"Of course I do," exclaimed the captain. "Can you bring me some? Do so as soon as you can. Go ashore now."

"No!" replied Sassago. "Old Pequot no go right away. Want to see big ship a little. 'Tay a while. Ask Miss Montanye let him get heap deer for big ship Cap'n."

"You may stay a bit then. Stand aside! Trice that fellow up."

This was the meaning of the previous preparation. The customary gratings were there, so was a boatswain's mate, so was a cat-o'-nine tails. Evidently the Pequot now understood the matter and a kind of terrible grin shot across his face.

"I am Samuel Green," said the privateer, loudly. "I am the first officer of the American privateer *Montauk*. You have no right to impress or flog me."

"Silence, you pirate," roared the captain. "You also are to be held to account for the murder of the captain and crew of an English letter of marque. I shall know where to find you. Bos'n's mate, give him a dozen!"

Sam Green's broad back had been bared and he had been firmly triced to the gratings. No light hand was that of the boatswain's mate and blood flowed freely in the lines of the furrows that were made as the lashes fell. Sam never flinched, but his teeth were hard set. There was no cause for such a punishment. Nothing was behind it, but the arbitrary will of Captain Vaile and an idea he had formed that this man must be cowed in order that he might the better answer questionings.

Sassago's glittering red eyes had glanced at each blow of the falling whip to the back it fell upon.

"Old Pequot 'member," he hissed between his closed teeth. "Seben lobster lose 'calp for flog Sassago. Seben more, s'pose he get 'em. Bedford no dead yet, he lose 'calp, too."

Sam Green's face at that moment turned towards Captain Vaile and then was turned away. The captain was watching him unconcernedly. He had seen men flogged frequently and he expected them to wear wrathful faces under the lash. He did not, therefore, read Sam's face as correctly as did the Indian.

"Old Pequot see what he mean," he muttered exultingly. "Kill Cap'n, sure, some day. Take knife. Take club. Kill him anyhow. Old Pequot like him. Help him. 'Calp Cap'n!"

Sam's thoughts had not been erroneously interpreted, for he was thinking:

"I will go to ship's duty, if it's only to bide my time. That man will never die in his bed, though, nor will Lieutenant Gregg. I haven't any feelin' about lettin' out such a pair o' souls as their'n."

"One for good measure!" said the boatswain's mate as the thirteenth stroke fell upon Sam's

lacerated back, and, then the flogged sailor was cast loose to be rubbed with brine and otherwise prepared for duty as an able seaman on a British man of war.

Sassago had already remarked, loudly:

"Old Pequot say good-bye, Cap'n. Bring deer pretty soon. Go get 'em way in wood."

"All right," said the captain. "I will see Bedford about it."

The old Indian had turned away at once and he seemed sufficiently interested in the flogging to go and stand by Sam for a minute.

"Sassago hear him," he said in a very low mutter. "Know *Montauk.* Know Wilton. Montanye. No talk now. Come again. Try see Sam. Talk we'n come. Kill heap redcoat."

Sam was a man of steady nerve. He was suffering intensely in body and mind, but he heard the Pequot without seeming to hear and when Sassago went over the side no other man on board the *Ascalon* knew that all the Americans imprisoned within her had been provided with a kind of post-boy between them and their friends on shore. The copper colored post-boy in the boat pulling toward the shore, was now in a manner dealing with questions of state. He looked grimly at the faces of his oarsmen, both of them

the property of Mr. Kruger, and then back at the *Ascalon*, and he sagely asserted, whether they heard him or not:

"Lobster, all slabe:—officer flog 'em. Hess'n all slabe: get flog. Sailor on ship all slabe: get flog a heap. All nigger need heap flog. All slabe. Old Pequot no slabe. Belong to Miss Montanye. Hunt, fish, go see big ship, 'calp lobster for flog him. Flog him once. All dead now. No flog him any more."

His philosophic conclusion seemed to be that any man who could be flogged without turning round and killing the man who flogged him was a slave, really, but that a sense of free manhood might be preserved by retaliation. On the other hand, perhaps for like reasons, black men, were slaves by nature and never could become anything else.

He did but share the opinions of many thousands of good and patriotic, even pious Americans.

On landing he hastened to make his report to Dr. Montanye, at the house, and he met him alone, although Major Bedford was also there, for the major was in the parlor with Mrs. Wilton and Madeline making some arrangements related to the ball. An entirely reasonable excuse had been found for calling and the gallant officer was almost

succeeding in making himself a welcome guest, for he was an exceedingly accomplished gentleman.

Dr. Montanye listened to Sassago, and he betrayed fierce anger, for him, as he heard the story of the flogging.

"A time will come," he began, and then he recovered himself to say: "Get him his venison by all means, cost what it may. You must go on board again and find out all you can. Richard Wilton is on that ship. Great heavens! How I am situated! I dare not show any sympathy for a rebel prisoner. No! His mother must not know this, not yet."

"Sassago, say, hol' on. Wait a bit. Get deer for Cap'n right away. He get kill bye and bye for flog Sam."

"We will wait," said Dr. Montanye, and he did not say it as if he were speaking to one of his own slaves.

Sassago went out to tell Nanny that he had been on board the very ship that was waiting to kidnap her. He again offered to scalp her, too, and all the while Major Bedford was chatting with good Mrs. Wilton. He did not deem it needful to tell her about her son, nor to tell Madeline about her turquoises. It might, indeed have diminished their prospective enjoyment of Sir Guy's ball.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GETTING READY FOR TRADE.

DEER are not to be taken every day and anywhere. The hunting grounds north of the Hudson river had been swept clear of game by hunting parties of both armies. Sassago's next visit to the *Ascalon* could not be made, therefore, until he could communicate with friends on Long Island. Deer were still plentiful there and were not to disappear until nearly a century later. There were Indians there, also, remnants of the clans which were termed "Little Bush Indians" by the haughty Iroquois, not because of the size of the forests they hunted in, but because among their families there was not one "bush" large enough to be called a tree or tribe. To these sportsmen Sassago had applied and Captain Vaile's venison surely would come, but there was time for other events to arrive first.

Richard Wilton was in his narrow den the next morning and Sam Green was in the forecastle of the *Ascalon.* Sam was stiff with the fever of his flogging and burning with revenge for it while Captain Vaile sat with Admiral Digby at

Sir Guy's quarters on shore, giving a conversational account of his voyage. It contained some things outside of his official report.

"I do not care to trouble the Admiral with one case," he remarked. "The *Montauk* is lawful prize, of course, in spite of the preliminary treaty of peace, but as to the piracy question there is a doubt. Who knows what sort of cruiser this *Leon* or *Douglas* really was? Her captain, crew and papers are missing and there is a pretty plain suggestion of a black flag."

"Captain Mark Wilton seems to be the best witness, or some of the Yankee buccaneers who went with him. Perhaps some of the *Montauk* men, if you needed testimony."

"Perhaps it would be just as well not to stir up so peculiarly difficult a case," said the captain, for here was a point of danger.

"Wilton has not been heard from," replied the Admiral. "It may be long before he is. What disposition have you made of the *Montauk* men?"

"Humph!" said the captain. "They are all prime seamen. All but their skipper have been duly 'pressed to serve their King. I wish I had more of them."

"You needn't make any exception of the skip-

per, just now," laughed the Admiral. "Send him into your own forecastle. He will find enough pirates there to keep him company. Give him a round dozen and set him at work."

"Exactly!" said the captain. "The truth is, I am short handed in spite of this catch."

"All right, my boy," replied the brave and jolly Admiral. "I shall see you at the ball. They say there are some very pretty women among these belles of New York. Think of a hole like this half burnt town with a score of beauties to show! I don't believe it."

So the captain had obtained his point and went out to be met, in the most cordial manner by that very loyal New Yorker, Rev. Dr. Peter Montanye, who had been acquiring much information at the army headquarters.

That was a busy morning in a great variety of places. Every port on the coast of the United States was slowly waking up, as each in turn was reached by tidings of the preliminary peace and the cessation of active hostilities. From the ports the news went inland, to the towns and hamlets and the scattered farm houses of the North and the sunny plantations of the South. Wherever the good news came it found a condition of affairs that some historians have not correctly recorded.

They have told their readers generally of the poverty and desolation of the country at the close of the war for independence and they have told very little of its riches. With exceptions of a few moderate areas held by British garrisons or with British camps for near neighbors, and such as had been too severely harried by war operations, like parts of New Jersey, southeastern New York, and some parts of Virginia and the Carolinas, larger or smaller, there had been a great increase of both population and prosperity. During all her seven years of conflict with the mother country, the strong hands of American workingmen had ploughed, sowed, reaped, builded, while many branches of trade and manufacture previously unknown or impossible were in successful operation, expanding rapidly. There was not coin enough for business purposes, but there was so much that when the Continental paper currency disappeared no great inconvenience resulted. Rather a pernicious hindrance was removed. "There would be cash enough to buy Congos with, if we could bring them here," said Mate Devoort to Captain Wilton.

"That is what we can't do," replied the Captain. "But there are other markets."

They were completing the unloading of the

Sumter at her Baltimore wharf. There had been no obstacle whatever put in the way of keeping her and employing her as they might please. She was to be henceforth an out-and-out American, with papers setting forth that she had been built at Nantucket and that omitted all unnecessary features of her subsequent record.

"I don't care to talk about Africa, just now," said Captain Wilton, somewhat gloomily, a little later. "I wish I could hear something of Dick. I can't, though, short of New York. It would take me ten days to get there, as I'd have to go."

"Cap'n," said the mate, "the British are there yet. "You couldn't venture inside o' the lines and not be locked up. They'd do it sure as guns, or they'd send a 'press gang after you."

"I'm going anyhow," exclaimed Captain Wilton. "I can't stand this. You stay here and take care of the *Sumter*. You can get things ready for a trip to the slave coast, too. I'm going North. I'll find out what's become o' that boy o' mine and I'll see my wife!"

"Wilton," said his friend, quietly, "If they have captured the *Montauk* and her papers, and Dick, and them prizes, the wust thing for him would be to have 'em get hold of you. It would stir up things about this 'ere very craft that we

took from the pirates. Jest do ye keep out o' their hands."

"I'll do that," said the Captain. "But I'm going. I ain't much on horseback, but I'm off for a ride. Get the *Sumter* ready, though, and if I can't get back right away, I'll make out to send you word."

"Well, you'd better go," said Devoort. "I would if I were you. I guess you can find out all there is to be found out without too much risk."

The day waned to its close, and as it did so, Madeline Montanye became more and more aware that she both wished and dreaded her grand evening at the ball. She felt quite sure that she would be well enough dressed. Mrs. Wilton would be a capital chaperon. Her father was to be with her. She almost refused to acknowledge to herself, however, that the secret of her dread was the flattering attentions of the distinguished Major Bedford.

She had abundant pride. She did not care too much for his aristocratic family connections or his possible rank and fortune, but she felt with an increasing keenness of womanly perception, that there was too much of him.

The hour came, and so did the Major, with his sleigh and his exceedingly polite care for all

the members of the Montanye party. Not a fault was to be found with him, and Madeline began to feel better. The drive was a pretty long one in the still, frosty, starlit night.

When the sleigh drew up at Fraunce's Tavern every window of it was brightly illuminated. Other equipages were coming and going. There were glittering uniforms to be seen flitting back and forth, without and within. So Madeline forgot everything but the exhilaration of the ball and talked with the Major as they went in as if he were a trusted, acknowledged friend of her father. So did Mrs. Wilton, for that good woman was exuberantly fond of Madeline and rejoiced that her favorite was to shine in so select and brilliant an assembly.

It was indeed, select, and the lines had been drawn a little curiously. Wives of high British officials, army or navy, came upon the list of course, but just below that high-water mark a preference had been given to ladies of "the province," for British pride as yet refused to say "State of New York."

Etiquette required that when all was ready Madeline should enter the ball room with her father and Mrs. Wilton, but her first quadrille was danced with Major Bedford as her partner.

"She is the loveliest girl in the room," exclaimed Mrs. Wilton to Dr. Montanye. "I don't care how pretty the Misses Kruger are, nor any of the others."

"I think this is their last great ball in America," she heard him mutter. "Washington will be here before the snow comes again."

He was not thinking of the dancers altogether at that moment. The next he was thinking of his daughter with pride and admiration, but he was following her with eyes which were flashing fire, for he could read only too well the man she was dancing with.

It was not a great while before Madeline was led out by the Hon. Captain Vaile, of the *Ascalon*, brave British sailor and accomplished gentleman. He was impressively attentive, and when, at the end of the set he led her to a seat, she introduced him to Mrs. Wilton. He actually remained to converse with her after Madeline walked away with one of the Kruger girls, a daring, patriotic and very dashing brunette.

The gallant captain's next chat, however, was with Major Bedford.

"Ah, my boy!" he said, "I can't blame you. You mustn't leave your beautiful blonde behind you when you go—"

"It won't be this time," interposed the Major. "No haste, you know."

"Ah—hah! At the end, eh? You will know when to make your hit. The *Ascalon* can carry you both, my boy. But the good taste of that pirate! I'm glad we've penned him in. His mother is a charming woman. How those turquoises would become la belle Montanye!"

"Indeed they would," said Bedford.

"You shall have them, my dear fellow. You can settle for them in London, or anyhow you will. You'll need to be making her presents before long. Take them. They are a point for you."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Major, "you're a right down good fellow! They are just the thing. You won't lose anything by it in the long run."

"Never mind that, my boy. But they would look so well on her!"

It was liberally, kindly done between two old and warm-hearted friends. Richard Wilton's gift was to reach Madeline after all by the hands of her British admirer, but neither she nor Dick's mother had their enjoyment of the ball ruined by any knowledge of the dark, foul-aired box in which he at that hour lay in irons and thought of them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RICHARD WILTON'S GIFT.

AFTER a nearly all-night storm of festivity there is sure to come a day calm of weariness. It was not until the second day after the ball that Captain Vaile remembered the matter of Richard Wilton. Orders were issued, then Dick's irons were removed and he was sent to duty as a common seaman. The Captain did not take pains to speak to him in person. So small a matter as this might well be left to the care of Lieutenant Gregg. As to him, the victim was aware that he might as well have stormed a protest against the main mast. One angry outburst unwisely made procured him a kick at once from a heavy foot, a "rope's ending," and a promise of cat-o'-nine-tails to come. This was followed shortly by hard knuckles and by such blows as are inflicted by foul and blasphemous speech. In the course of Dick's very first day as a British sailor, Captain Vaile twice passed very near him without seeming to at all distinguish him from the other slaves of the *Ascalon.*

Being turned loose among the herd, however, brought at once to Dick opportunities for talks

with Sam Green and with other men from the old crew of the *Montauk*. Not a sailor among them but swore that he would escape, desert, at the first opportunity, if it cost him his life. Sam had also to tell them Sassago's promise to come again.

"I know him," said Dick. "We can trust him. He will carry any message we have ready to send by him."

"Watch, now," said Sam. "There will be a sharp lookout after all of us fellows."

That was of course, and Dick himself was an object of special interest even to the English seamen of the *Ascalon*. Moreover, there were officers who suspiciously asserted that there were too many Americans on board for the good of the ship. There might be unseen peril in carrying so many men who were known to hate every plank of her and to have good cause for vengeance. No harm, however, could be imagined in the arrival, a day or so later, of one native American who brought with him as fine a carcass of venison as Captain Vaile had ever seen.

"Bedford no send deer," he said. "Old Montanye send 'em. Big ship Cap'n eat a good deal. Make him feel good. Now old Pequot want to see ship. Bring Cap'n more deer."

"You've earned the show," laughed the cap-

tain heartily. "It's bigger than your canoe, isn't it? Lieutenant, let the queer old aborigine inspect the *Ascalon*. Tell the men to play no tricks on him."

"Ugh!" remarked Sassago, grinning with apparent good humor, "sailor pretty good. Old Pequot no 'calp 'em."

"Tell them that," again laughed the merry commander. "Their scalps are safe."

Away strolled the redskin adventurer, having with his venison bribed the naval authorities to let him scout at will among the usually guarded quarters of that rigidly disciplined ship of war.

The sailors took him for a joke, even when he kindly offered to scalp them all if they would pay him a visit on the shore. He did not linger long in any one spot and there was nothing at all suspicious about his movements. It was in the between-decks near the breech of a gun which a man was polishing, that the Pequot halted, as if to admire so large and fine a cannon. The polisher did not seem to pause in his work as the visitor leaned smilingly towards him, but he quietly extended a hand that nobody else saw and Sassago's blanket also went out a few inches.

"To Mrs. Sally Green. Marblehead. Wife of Sam Green. Tell her the rest."

"She get 'em," hissed Sassago. "Where Dick Wilton. Show him."

"Forward yonder, coilin' rope. See?"

"Ugh!" growled Sassago and in a moment more he was stooping to finger the rope. As he did so Dick could whisper in his ear in safety.

"Take that," he said as the second of the Araga pads vanished among the Pequot's buckskins. "It's for Miss Montanye. Tell mother I'm here. Tell her to beware of Captain Vaile. Say that father has not been captured. Tell Miss Montanye I will escape some day. Tell her to hate the British who make slaves of free American sailors."

"Ugh! Sassago come again. 'Calp lobster!" responded the Indian postboy, as he slouched away, for lingering longer might have attracted attention.

He made no apparent haste, but he had now seen enough of the *Ascalon* and Mr. Kruger's black bondsmen rowed him ashore, treating him with much respect as they did so. He had no errand to Mr. Kruger, however, nor to Major Bedford nor to any other person in the city. He even caught a sleigh ride that he might the sooner reach his real destination. Then it seemed almost as if he were getting to his own family when the

inmates of the Montanye house gathered around in the sitting-room and locked every door of it to prevent any kind of intrusion. Even Nanny was there and she seemed to be without fear of scalping or kidnapping. Mrs. Wilton's face whitened anxiously as she noted the tone and manner in which Dr. Montanye commanded Sassago to tell all and keep back nothing. He told it all very clearly in his Pequot way, not even omitting the affair of Sam Green, and Mrs. Wilton stared straight at him, at first, but then she bowed her head upon the table near her.

"I will attend to that errand to Sam Green's wife," calmly remarked Dr. Montanye. "She must get that parcel. It may be best for me to carry it myself. We will see. It must not be opened."

"Ugh!" said Sassago. "Montanye go. Old Pequot no find 'em. Dick all right. Say he 'cape some day. Send to Miss Montanye. He come see her."

He delivered to her the Araga pad, as he spoke, and she took it, exclaiming:

"Why, no!—Sassago. You must be mistaken. This was meant for his mother!"

"I won't take it," sobbed Mrs. Wilton.

"Neither will Madeline," said her father firmly.

"Not until after Captain Wilton's return, at all events. My dear, do not open it. This is a curious affair."

"Indeed I will not open it," she said, turning it curiously in her hand. "Father, do you keep it. I don't want to know what it is. O, dear! Can we not do something for Richard?"

"Not at once," he told her. "The *Ascalon* goes out on a cruise to-morrow. Major Bedford, for some business reason, has a furlough to sail suddenly for England. If he should call before sailing, Madeline, I must ask you to be civil to him—as civil as ever. There is something here which I must try and unravel a little while they are gone."

"While they are gone!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton. "O doctor! She is to sail? And my boy has been impressed! He can not escape from her! It is as if he were dead!"

"Not so, I think," kindly asserted the steady voiced clergyman. "God's providences are wonderful. We do not know what a day may bring forth. Be thankful now that you have heard from Richard. He is alive. Hope for the best."

"Doctor," she said, her face assuming a more courageous look, "it is hard, but I will. O! What a friend you are. I'll go up stairs."

She was very brave indeed, and she had been so all through those years, but she was a mother and a wife.

"Go out, now, Sassago," said the doctor. "I will see you again, pretty soon. No, Madeline. Don't go. Stay here. I have some things to say to you."

Madeline had half obeyed a strong impulse of sympathy to follow Mrs. Wilton, but she instantly understood that he was wiser and she sat down again. She knew, too, that something more was coming, for his face grew harder.

"Now," he said, as soon as they were alone, "will you look closely at this packet? See? These are stains of blood. We must know its history before we can say what we will do with it. After all said and done, the *Montauk* was a privateer. You do not altogether understand what that might be."

"Father," she exclaimed, "can there be anything wrong about Richard? O! Please don't let his mother think so!"

"Certainly not," he said, "but every secret comes out, in due time. We do know that there is a secret, of some sort, hidden here, and we do well to be cautious."

She kissed him, silently and went to sit by a

window and stare out at the snowbanks, while he in his stately way went up to his own room and locked the door of it behind him. At that moment, instantly, almost convulsively, his whole manner changed.

"Is it so?" he exclaimed. "I said it myself. Is it true that all secrets must some day be uncovered? The Scripture says so. Must every thing be found out? Where then is God's forgiveness? What is the use of repentance and change of life? O, my God! I believe it killed my wife. And now, my daughter! Let it not be on earth, O God! Let it remain until the Judgment of the great day! Do I not suffer?"

He was writhing in a struggle with some internal agony, and he cast himself, at full length, face down, upon the floor.

As he had forewarned his daughter, however, Major Bedford reined in his horse before the house a little after sunset. Madeline met him in the parlor with at least an appearance of cordiality. He had but a moment, he said. He had come to say farewell for a season. He hoped, he told her with some earnestness, to be gone only long enough for a business trip to the mother country and a return.

Madeline was interested, of course, and she

said so, hardly trying to explain to herself why all her kindly courtesy was costing her so great an effort. The Major could not remain long, indeed. He talked well, he admired openly and exceedingly. At parting he held for a moment the hand she offered him in saying farewell and looked down into her face very intently.

"Miss Montanye," he said. "I go to claim a peerage. When I come again I shall have something to say which I can not say now."

Her hand drew quickly back and in all her thoughts there was not one word that could find its way to her astonished lips. As for the Major, he seemed to flash away and out of the house. In a moment more he was in the saddle galloping down the city road.

"How beautiful she is!" he exclaimed. "I almost said too much, though. I think that seed will sprout while I am at sea. I will try and gather the fruit of it when I return."

"Ugh!" growled Sassago, looking after him from the gateway. "Bedford ride, now. Come again? Old Pequot wait. 'Calp him, one day."

One thing more was not yet known to the Montanye house. A cruiser from the West India squadron had arrived in New York and she reported that no tidings of the *Douglas* had reached

the Havana. She must, it was thought, have been captured, and, in that case, her cargo as well as her crew might now be on its way to England, her black passengers of course, landing at Jamaica. The same cruiser reported the loss of a lieutenant and twelve men, a press gang, kidnapped and carried off to Baltimore by a Yankee sugar boat. Perhaps they were to be recovered by the British authorities, all but five, who had already recovered themselves.

CHAPTER XXV.

MAJOR BEDFORD'S PRESENT.

THE camp of the Highlanders was away up above the city, on the west side. That region was not at all aristocratic. Neither were Colonel Campbell's headquarters in an old farm house, but they were quite comfortable while his wife was looking uncomfortable.

"Jack," she said to a young man who was sitting in front of her "the Wiltons were not pirates. They are not ruffians at all. We could not have asked for better treatment. I hate Captain Vaile!"

"Well," replied the handsome midshipman to his indignant aunt, for such she was, "I don't see what I can do for them. We're ordered to the West India squadron. I don't know how long it will be before we put into New York harbor again."

"And I don't know how long it will be before we can get out," she responded dolefully. "I have made up my mind anyhow, I'm going to call on Mrs. Wilton. I couldn't speak to her about such a thing at the ball, but I found out that she is his mother. Major Bedford knows her."

"Bedford!" said Mackenzie. "He is off for

England in the *Southerland*. We know what he is going for, too. I can't see what he can do for himself so long as his brother Algernon is alive."

"Perhaps he isn't," she said. "Who knows? Your claim is as good as theirs. Neither of them ought ever to become Lord Towton—The Major won't—"

"Yes, he will," said Jack, a little gloomily. "I shall never be anything but a sailor. Promotion is slow—"

"I want to say one thing more," she interrupted him. "When Captain Vaile called with his miserable apologies, he had a great deal to say about that pirate ship. He tried to find out if I had learned anything about her captain. If there is anything to be learned, why can't you find it out? You can see young Wilton and have talks with him."

"I think I'll try," said Jack. "It's a queer piece of work. I must go, now."

This was one little picture out of several which might have been taken among that and the next day's occurrences. Another was on the quarter deck of the *Ascalon* as she prepared to lift her anchor and spread her sails. Once more Sam Green stood before his British captor and commander, who was regarded by him, however, only

as a kind of man-thief and a rascally flogger of free Americans.

"You were heard to say," said the captain, sternly, "that this ship would never be wrecked with so many Yankees on board. What do you mean by that? I can have you swung from a yardarm!"

Externally, at least, Sam appeared to have no feelings, sore as was his back and very sore as was his heart.

"I said it, sir," he quietly responded. "Any ship is safer in good hands, men who don't propose to be food for sharks. And I'll tell you, if you don't know it, more'n half the fellers out there are lubbers!"

"Fact!" exclaimed the captain.

"This 'ere is said to be a West Ingy cruiser," continued Sam. "We're goin' into the wust kind o' navigation. I know it like a book."

"We're to be landed on a reef, eh?" inquired the captain, suspiciously.

"You will be as sure as guns, if you don't pick your steersman," said Sam. "That's what I mean, sir. This 'ere whole ship's company's for shark bait."

"Go to your duty!" roared the captain, with a sudden change of manner and a face flushed with sudden anxiety.

Well it might be, for more than one fine ship had come to grief among the Antilles, and Sam's gloomy warning came from a good sailor.

"Not on a reef, captain," remarked Lieutenant Gregg, near him. "They'd not do that for their own sakes, but any man of 'em would beach us if he could. That man's dangerous."

"Not a bit of it," responded the captain. "The flogging did him good. He knows the meaning of a lee shore among the islands. We can make use of him."

"He'll bear watching," said Gregg.

Sam himself marched away.

"I won't drown a whole crew," he muttered, as he went, "but I'm goin' to get even with him and Gregg. Sally mustn't wait for me for ever."

Later, in the afternoon of the next day, the frigate *Southerland*, bound for England, went out to sea with a fair wind and Major Bedford was on board of her. It had been easy for such as he to obtain leave of absence at such a time, but he was uneasy in his mind. Before him was a world of uncertainty concerning the Towton barony and behind him, as he thought it over, loomed up a sad doubt concerning Madeline.

"I hope she will get her turquoises," he said to himself. "They are splendid things for a min-

ister's daughter. Wasn't she herself splendid, though, at the ball. That's the worst of it. Vaile himself was taken. I'm glad he is off on a cruise, but he'll be there again. He would'nt hesitate a minute to cut me out and then laugh at me."

Such confidence did the two dear friends have in each other's honor!—at least where beautiful women might be concerned.

Neither of them was under any great need for uneasiness relating to the conduct of the other. Not at all in secret, as a blushing maiden might be expected to examine a memento, but in the presence of her father and Mrs. Wilton, Madeline Montanye was opening a small parcel which had been brought to her by an orderly from the headquarters of the British army. The outer envelope came off disclosing a pretty, morocco leather casket. This, too, flew open when Madeline touched the spring with fingers that were not at all tremulous.

Then indeed she turned pale.

"From Major Robert Bedford!" she exclaimed. 'What can he mean?"

"Beautiful!" sprang from the lips of Mrs. Wilton. "My dear—"

"Madeline!"

Her father's voice was hoarse and there was

an angry light in his eyes. There lay the turquoises, as bright and beautiful in their rich, golden setting, as when Dick Wilton had admired them, hoping that his mother also would be pleased with his present to her pretty friend Madeline. Upon them lay only a card inscribed with the words which she read aloud.

"I don't want them," she said. "I wish I could send them back! O! What shall I do?"

"I will see to them," said her father. "Let me have them. It is no fault of yours."

Her bewildered angry face fully confirmed that assertion. She snapped down the cover of the case, handed it to him and went out of the room. He took it and carried it away in silence, with a grinding of teeth, for he was not only a clergyman, but a man of the world. He believed that he knew what was in the mind of Major Robert Bedford.

Madeline was alone in her room walking up and down in great agitation. She paused in front of her mirror, suddenly, as if for a look at herself. She experienced even a feeling of gratification as seeing how pale was her face. The eyes, too, which looked back at her were large and deeply troubled. Nevertheless she became indignantly inquisitive.

"Is there indeed any error on my part?" she demanded of the face in the glass. "Did I ever encourage him? I am sure that I did not! I could not help being civil. How could he be so vain, so stupid! I believe they all are—those British officers! Faugh!"

She sat down in the chair at the window, pondering deeply, and before long a shudder went over her.

"How dare he!" she whispered. "I detest him! He frightens me, too. O! How I wish he would never come back!"

A sense of coming peril was upon her and the hope of never seeing him was as a straw to be grasped at. Also, her father, sitting alone in like manner, was remarking to himself that the coast was clear, for the time, so far as Major Bedford was concerned. He had locked up the turquoises in his trunk. There they lay, now, side by side with the mysterious, blood-stained pad which Sassago had brought from Richard Wilton for Madeline. The doctor could wait concerning that also, but he had considered, thoughtfully, the other pad, larger and somewhat heavier. Of that he now declared, positively.

"Sam Green's wife must have it. No, I will not trust any messenger. I will take it to her

myself. I think I'd like to be out of New York for a few weeks."

There would be no danger of any disturbance of his household during such an absence. Sir Guy Carleton wisely and humanely had ordered a strict military police and a careful protection of all the citizens of New York during its further occupation by the army under his command. He had also issued fairly liberal orders for their coming in and going out on business and for the prospective renewal of trade and commerce. The only persons who were not at all safe to come in and go around the town were Yankee sailors, for one of these was altogether too likely to meet a press-gang.

Dr. Montanye did not delay the performance of his purpose. Three days later he was riding along the old Boston road which is still Boston avenue, in New York City.

"I shall see Kruger's people in Boston," he remarked. "My soul! What a fleet of old privateers there will be running between the United States and Africa!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE "SUMTER" AND THE "ASCALON."

THE second day after Dr. Montanye departed for New England, there was an interesting group gathered in his home parlor. The centre of it was a middle-aged, broad-shouldered man, whose fine clothing was not seemingly at war with his bronzed face, and his tar-stained hands, for a sea captain may also have excellent company manners.

Captain Mark Wilton had passed through the loosely-kept army lines as a Mr. Johnson of Baltimore, having business with Mr. Kruger, the New York loyalist and merchant, and others like him. He had made his way up the island without being recognized by anybody, until, at the Montanye gate, he had been confronted by a man whose black eyes lit up with a sudden gleam. "Ugh!" he exclaimed sharply. "Old Wilton come back! Sassago know him. No let Gen'l Guy know him. Lock him up!"

"Sassago, how are things?" asked the captain.

The old Pequot was eager to tell, and the captain received a full account of Richard, Sam Green and others, so that he was the better pre-

pared for the long and loving interview with his wife which quickly followed, in the house. This was over, now, and he could talk with Madeline also, tell her his gratitude to her and her father for their kindness to Mrs. Wilton. Now came out incidentally the complete story of the two pads, so far as Mrs. Wilton knew it.

"Well," he said, "Sam would be glad that his wife is to get it, whatever it is. But Richard! Where on earth did he get the other? He had a tip-top set of turquoises for Madeline and a lot of other things, but the *Ascalon* officers got them, of course, when they took the *Montauk*. Captain Vaile or Lieutenant Gregg must have those turquoises."

"Mark Wilton!" exclaimed his wife. "Tell me! What were they like?"

He could describe them accurately, stone by stone, and did so, while the two women exchanged astonished glances.

"Madeline," said his wife, after he had so regretfully painted the blue and gold ornaments and Dick's disappointment at their change of destination: "Captain Vaile is an intimate friend of Major Bedford. I guess those things didn't cost the Major a great deal. Husband, they are up stairs now in Dr. Montayne's own strong box."

"O," gasped Madeline, but it was too late for concealment.

The entire story followed and the captain sat and considered the matter, now and then groaning about Dick and all the while admiring Madeline.

"That's it!" he exclaimed at last. "I see it! Sam Green won those pad affairs when he killed Araga."

"He was the pirate captain?" asked his wife.

"Yes, said her husband," but he wasn't any Spaniard. He was an Englishman and his real name was Bedford. I believe, though, his papers were mixed a little. He was an out-and-out cut-throat."

"Now, I want to know something more," said his wife, while Madeline listened breathlessly. "I must see Mrs. Colonel Campbell right away. She called on me yesterday to tell me how well you and Dick treated her and the rest of them. Were all the pirates killed? The captain?"

"Not a soul escaped!" he told her, but he added: "I guess I won't say any more about that just now. Dick would hate to have anybody but Madeline get those turquoises. I wish she could keep 'em, somehow. Not that way. The pad must have been sent in place of them. I hope there's something in it."

"Nobody will know about that until Dr. Montanye gets back," she said. "And now one thing more, Mark Wilton! These doubloons you brought with you. What am I to do with them? Why! They seem to me like the price of blood! I can't spend them like other money."

"O, no, there're not anything of that kind," he told her. "They didn't come from the pirate. They are the cash I got for those Congos. I'm off after more, too, right away. It won't do for me to stay here and get myself sent to England in irons. I can see clearly what they are up to. I'll trust Dick to get away from 'em soon as he can. Sam Green, too. The *Sumter* 'll be ready for sea by the time I get back to Baltimore."

"O, not for Africa! Not after slaves!" said Mrs. Wilton. "Mark, dear, don't say that! I can't have it! Don't do it!"

"Well," he responded obstinately. "Somebody must and will do it. It's all I can see to do, just now. I'll treat 'em better than anybody else would. I'll save their lives for 'em all the way coming. Of course I'd rather stay here, but I can't. I'd be caught in less'n a week."

It was of no use for her to beg and argue, even after they were alone together. He had already seen Kruger and not only that merchant

but many of the best men in other ports were going into the slave business. He refused to change his purpose and, for every hour might have deadly danger in it, he said an affectionate farewell and went his way. When he was gone, Mrs. Wilton took the bag of doubloons, lifting it and putting it down again, several times.

The feeling she had of strong aversion to that bag was quite remarkable, for a woman of that day and of her surroundings, but at last she said aloud :

"I don't want him to do it, but I don't see how I can help myself. I am out of money. It was not my fault. I'll think about it."

So she took the bag and hid it away carefully.

Her husband's first anxiety was to get out of New York and he succeeded in doing so. He entirely used up the good horse that carried him before he even reached Philadelphia. After that the poor beast upon whose back, as he expressed it, "he sailed for Baltimore," felt as if some kind of hurricane had mounted him.

Devoort was ready upon the captain's arrival and so was the *Sumter*.

"I'll tell ye what, captain," reported the mate, "I've been lucky to pick up all I did. 'Tisn't like havin' a Liverpool market to select in."

"What stuff did you get?" asked the captain. "Not all sorts'll do."

"To trade for niggers?" replied the mate. "Well, I took loads of old muskets, all sorts, most on'em captured from the British and sold by the gov'ment. Axes and hatchets. They were hard to find. Knives and beads and caliker. It's mostly red, the caliker is. Fish hooks. A lot o' cheap tobakker. But our strong hold is New England rum. And I jest laid it in. We can trade!"

It was all on board and the *Sumter* lay out in the stream waiting for her captain.

He was in no humor for lingering and her anchor came up that very afternoon. Then her canvas went up as if she had a race to run, or were afraid lest the African coast might be stripped of its merchandise before she could get there.

Captain Wilton had his own notion as to the course which he was to sail and he had long since discovered that the ex-pirate schooner under him was a marvel of speed as well as a capital sea-boat. The only change in her armament was a new pivot-gun, of better calibre and mounting, for the old piece had seemed defective. She carried a picked crew, including several of the old *Montauk*

men, as eager as ever for any kind of reckless adventure. What would have been a pokerish business for some men was to them as a pleasure trip. "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, the furrow followed free," and the *Sumter* was spinning along near the close of her third day, in the open sea. Only one other sail was in sight, or rather it was a towering cloud of sails belonging to a full-rigged ship that was bowling along on the same tack.

"I know her," said Captain Wilton, lowering his glass after a long scrutiny. "I heard in New York that she was cruising hereaway. It is the *Ascalon!* My Dick is on board of her! So are Sam Green and more of our fellows. She can't catch the *Sumter*, though. Let her bang away."

"Let her rip!" said mate Devoort, for a gun-signal to heave to had already been fired by the *Ascalon*, that a boat might be sent on board the Yankee schooner for an inspection of her papers and for as many of her crew as might be selected for the British navy, according to the usual custom.

On board the *Ascalon* there was also the usual expectation that her small victim would promptly obey the summons. Glasses were busy and one of these was in the hands of midshipman Jack Mackenzie, standing near the foremast. Near

him was a pair of sailors who had already been informed why he was disposed to think well of them, and who in return had given him valuable information, but not all of the things they knew.

Lieutenant Gregg, on the quarter-deck, turned suddenly with an angry oath and exclaimed:

"Captain Vaile, look! Those flags! Curse their impudence!"

"Sink her!" roared the captain. "Let drive as soon as we're within range!"

The *Sumter* was showing not one flag only, but three. At her peak flew out the Stars and Stripes. Just under it was the old Colonial flag of Massachusetts. Under that, upside down, floated sulkily the British ensign itself.

Anticipated triumph and utter derision was thus contemptuously expressed by a mere slaver to a sixty-gun ship.

"May I look, sir?" asked Sam Green of the midshipman, whose face was now so fiery red with indignation.

"See what you make of her," he responded.

After a minute of careful squinting through the telescope, Sam laughed.

"I know her, sir. She was built at Nantucket. Six heavy nines and a long thirty-two amidships.

She's a clipper to go. Dick, that's your father's old flag, with a shot hole in the middle of it."

"Do you know who commands her?"

"Mr. Mackenzie," said Sam, "I s'pose you'll have to report her. Her captain's name is Mark Wilton."

"I know," said the midshipman. "She was the Spanish pirate *Leon*."

"With an English captain by the name of Bedford," said Sam. "His skull-and-bones name was Araga."

"Algernon Bedford!" escaped from Jack. "Are you sure he was killed?"

"Split through the head," replied Sam, almost exultingly, while the heavy guns of the *Ascalon* rang out peal after peal. "They haven't touched her! Now, she speaks! That long thirty-two can carry further—"

He did not really know that piece of ordnance, but one gun will often show better qualities than another of the same size. Whoever had aimed this one was a good shot, moreover, for the port of Captain Vaile's own cabin went crashing in, and a bad mess was made of many things inside.

"We must catch that fellow!" roared the furious commander, but the sun was near the horizon, and a whale like the *Ascalon* could hardly hope to catch a sea-hawk like the *Sumter* with all the

shadows of the Atlantic night for her to hide under.

Midshipman Mackenzie made his report and the captain's face grew angrier than ever. So did that of his first lieutenant, although not for the same reason. The fact was that even the name of Wilton seemed to sting him, as if a sort of revenge on him had been taken.

Sam Green was sent for and he had many questions from Captain Vaile to answer while the saucy *Sumter* was perceptibly slipping away beyond the reach of the *Ascalon's* best guns. For some reason or other, Dick Wilton was not called for, nor did the captain tell any man why he felt so deep an interest in one Yankee schooner, more than another. He was thinking deeply, nevertheless, and the burden of his thoughts were :

" So ! Algernon Bedford was really killed, was he ? And the old baron is dying ? Then Robert Bedford is Lord Towton. Well ! If he gets into the House of Lords, it won't do me any harm. It won't do his Yankee beauty any good either. I must keep my grip on Wilton and Sam Green, tight ! They may be needed before a London court some day."

For that reason they were more than ever as two convicts in jail—on board the prison warship *Ascalon.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

DR. MONTANYE'S ERRAND.

THE New York and Boston stage road was entirely free beyond the British lines. Even these were now practically open to recognized citizens with papers. Most of the traveling of that day, however, was performed on horseback. Dr. Montanye was well mounted and he carried other weight besides his own. His saddlebags were fat looking and with them, behind him, was a small, cylindrical valise. There were pistol holsters in front. Even a clergyman might not be secure from the operations of highwaymen.

The roads were not safe in that respect and they were in bad condition otherwise, for a thaw had broken them up. It was not fatigue, however, which induced him to rest, as he did, at New London and other places. At the Connecticut seaport, days were expended in seeing all that he wished to see and to obtain the information he required.

"I have them," he said to himself, as he at last mounted and rode away. "I got them cheaper than I expected, all four of them. They are in

prime condition and well armed. I think they are the right vessels for the African trade."

From further indications it appeared that he had acted as an agent for New York merchants in securing vessels by means of which they might carry out extensive plans for future emolument. He had made such first payments as were necessary, remainders to follow as per contract. His horse had therefore less weight to carry, although his rider still had with him funds for other transactions at other ports.

He did well, also, at Newport and at Providence, but it was at Boston that he expressed the greatest satisfaction over his success in transferring good keels from New Englanders to New Yorkers.

"We shall beat them all," he said. "It is a pity that our own country is not to have the benefit of so many laborers. We shall make money, I suppose, but what a harvest Kruger has reaped, from his Boston privateers!"

British commercial statistics, official and otherwise, had already made public, in part, the ravages inflicted by the American privateer navy. Even at the close of the war the regular or national service contained only twenty-five vessels, most of them small. These had been singularly

efficient, but the prizes of the private armed vessels were to be counted by hundreds.

Dr. Montanye neglected no part of his business and it was near the end of February before he could attend to one important affair. He rode all the way to Marblehead, then, only to find that Mrs. Sally Green had left that place to take up her abode in Boston. Back he went and his seafaring friends helped him to find her.

A brave faced, energetic little woman was Mrs. Green, living in a small brown house, near the shore of what was then the Back Bay. No less than five young Greens gathered around, at first, while the doctor began to deliver his tidings of their father. Sally heard him through without uttering a word, although her face grew white and her lips quivered. He had not yet spoken of the pad, and he had paused for a moment.

"Sam, pressed by the British," she exclaimed. "He'd rather be killed! O dear! It's more'n a year since we've seen him. O, my God! Have mercy! When! When shall we see him again?"

It was an honest question asked of her Maker, rather than a mere exclamation of grief. As she uttered it she dropped upon her knees and asked it over and over, with passionate earnestness, while all her children came kneeling around her.

Then with them knelt at once, as devoutly, Rev. Dr. Montanye himself, and his deep voice arose as earnestly and sincerely as did the sobs and broken petitions of Sam's wife. He had not the slightest idea that his doing so, as a friend, as a clergyman, was at all inconsistent with the fact that he was so actively engaged in obtaining and fitting out vessels for the Congo trade in men.

Not until the outburst of mingled sorrow and devotion was entirely over, did he ask for a more private interview, that he might deliver Sam's valuable memento.

"Please do not open it," he said to her when he handed her the pad. "I wish to be ignorant of its contents. I sincerely trust that it may be of use to you and the children."

"I've had hard work to support them," she said, but he did not wait to hear many particulars of her brave struggling. He had performed his trust, faithfully, and he was now eager to return home.

After she had said goodbye to him, Mrs. Green took one peep into the little oilskin packet and instantly shut it up again.

"Oh! How it frightens me!" she exclaimed. "Jewels! I don't know anything about 'em nor what they're worth. I'll keep 'em all, just as they

are, 'til Sam gets home. I'm glad there's a little cash. It's English gold. Some Bank of England notes, too. Where did Sam get it? I don't care where or how he got it. The children'll have enough to eat and drink and wear now. We can live in a better house. Oh, Sam! Will you never come home? Those dreadful British ships! They flog men! They crush their lives out! They murder them! Sam! Sam! Come home!

He was far away from her, among the island studded seas which were now in their early spring time, and the *Ascalon* was no more a floating prison than was many another ship-of-war.

That very afternoon Dr. Montanye set out for New York.

"Our port," he said, "has decided advantages over Boston, either for the slave trade, or, I think, for other kinds of commerce."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

KING TOM'S CATTLE PEN.

FAIR winds favored Captain Wilton and his beautiful, swift schooner. She was caught in no calm and she was hindered by no enemy. Storms which arose around her ocean path did but drive her more speedily toward her destination. If there had been something indefinite about that, before her arrival upon the African coast, the uncertainty was removed by information obtained at the first points at which she touched.

"There are plenty to be had," remarked the captain to his mate, as they lounged and talked, one brilliant tropical evening. "If all we've heard is true, though, we must keep a sharp look-out. There are more British traders, hereaway, than might be pleasant for us."

"Well!" said Devoort. "We don't want any real brush with 'em. What we need to do is to load up as soon as we can and sail away. The British always did have the cream of the African trade, and they'll do their best to keep hold of it. They were in it first."

That was partly true, for even before the year

1700, British keels had ferried across the Atlantic no less than 300,000 Africans, not counting losses by the way. Only a part of these, however, had gone to the colonies which were now the United States. Such as had done so, with large additions otherwise obtained, had laid a broad foundation for the black population which was yet to become so important and dangerous a feature of American politics and history. Moreover, the time was near at hand when the passenger service which was responsible for its presence would be declared piracy by statute law.

Captain Wilton and his crew had no such idea of their moral position, that fair evening at sea. Not so were they regarded by a group of intelligent New York merchants who were at that hour gathered in Mr. Kruger's counting room to hear an interesting report made by their friend, Rev. Dr. Montanye and to discuss the future of the black labor question. The best names of the State were there, both from the city and from up the Hudson. Among them were staunch patriots who had made generous sacrifices for their country, during the war. Perhaps they were none the less ready to rebuild somewhat broken fortunes by energetic commercial enterprises. Some of them, like Mr. Kruger, were not dam-

aged in purse at all and there was sufficient capital represented to pay for and fit out all the ex-privateers which the doctor had secured during his New England journey. Through him and his friend Kruger they all knew about Captain Wilton and the *Sumter*, and they agreed, with one voice, that he was just the man to succeed, and would surely bring back information of importance.

Nevertheless, it was to be noted that almost every man present was willing that only his confidential friends, and not the general public, should be aware that he was launching into the Congo trade. Of course none of them expected to bring cargoes to the wharves of New York and they were well satisfied to have it so. It was very much as if the shadows of the coming condemnation were already creeping over the business. Possibly even such good men as those were mentally preparing to wash their hands in public, whatever profits they might make and count and privately stow away as, from time to time, their African reports should reach them.

They were entirely correct in their estimate of Captain Mark Wilton.

A few nights later, the *Sumter* lay at anchor a few fathoms out from the lowlying easterly bank

of the Congo river and about as many miles above its marsh bordered mouth. Close down near highwater mark, was what seemed in the flood of moonlight to be the beginning of some kind of town. An oval of strong palisades had been constructed around several capacious huts of heavy log-work. Beyond, and at various places up and down the bank, were other, similar structures and more, some of them quite large, were upon the high ground, inland. Beyond all was a very long line of palisades, a wooden wall for the protection, landward, of rows of huts, on either side of an irregular, straggling street. This was a slave town, one of the principal ports of the dominion of the great King Tom, celebrated for being as successful a man-stealer as any other tin-crowned autocrat among the murderous potentates of eastern Africa.

King Tom's Town was a fort, of necessity, but it required no cannon for its defense, for its only probable attacks might be expected from the greedy or revengeful raids of similar monarchs. These could not come by sea, but would be compelled to lead their warriors, cannibal or otherwise, through the dense forests which began at the borders of this not very extensive clearing. Above the port and below he was fairly well pro-

tected by the mangrove swamps among whose tangled growths the Congo fever crawled fetidly along the ooze in search of victims.

There was no need for any other than human destroyers of human life. In front of the largest collection of huts upon the central street upon the slope, and at other distinguished places there were pallid pyramids deftly constructed of skulls and bones from which the sun and rains had bleached away every remnant of flesh. They had not, however, destroyed entirely a strangely sickening odor which pervaded the air, suggesting how comparatively recent were probably some of the deposits of building materials.

These relics of humanity were not by any means all war trophies. They in large part represented the inevitable waste attending the King's methods for obtaining and storing his stock in trade. Even his black generals and cabinet ministers and the white merchants who dealt with him, could not induce him to practice profitable economy. He at any time preferred making a raid into the interior to any outlay of thought or care concerning his perishable goods. Most of all did he prefer lying still and drinking up his profits. There was, therefore, a continued mortality among the "pieces" garnered in his

barracoons, before they could be transferred to the hulls which were to bear them away to their future of toil in civilized lands beyond the sea. He and his ways, and the ways of other similar royal merchants, were but as minor and inevitable features of the great trade which had already laid the foundations of so many fortunes in Europe and America. Its record began and ended in unspeakable horrors.

That night there were a few dim lanterns swinging from the rigging of the *Sumter*. More were burning inside and at the landward gate of the stockaded barracoons at the water's edge. Boats came and went now and then, each of them crowded to its full capacity with dark, naked human forms which were helped or hoisted on board the schooner and were then led aft to be more or less roughly sent down, down into the black hollow where a like cargo had once been stowed in the days of Captain Araga.

The deck was in apple pie order. Every gun of either broadside was evidently ready for immediate use, and the long thirty-two sat grimly amidships, looking up the river. The men who were to be seen showed excellent discipline and knowledge of their several duties. They were performing these in a silence which was broken only

by occasional orders or by the harsh gutturals of black men and women and the frequently recurring sound of the blows of whips which cut deep in the striking.

It was an exceedingly interesting scene, presenting the entire subject of human bondage in a condensed and readable form. Over all and through all, nevertheless, seemed to brood an air of conscious peril, such, for instance, as might be supposed to belong to a gunpowder mill.

In the barracoon on shore the most interesting points, perhaps, were the landward gate in the stockade, guarded by stalwart seamen with cutlasses drawn and pistols in belt; and the opposite gate toward the river, at the narrow wharf to which the boats came to receive their passengers.

The gate toward the town, a massive piece of timberwork, strong enough to stop a musket ball, swung wide and through the six-feet opening so offered there was marching a night procession which was darker than any night. Two and two they came, both sexes, none less than pretty well grown and none at all that were aged. Slave hunters brought in no gray-haired folk nor children too young and feeble to endure a protracted sea voyage. All such were weeded out at the places of capture. All of these who were here

wore manacles and each pair was firmly bound to the central hawser which kept them in line.

Under some circumstances they would simply have been driven into the log-built prisons within the stockade. They had been brought from similiar dens in the larger barracoons, after having been selected and paid for.

"Prime lot!" was remarked of them by Captain Wilton, as he stood at the gateway, sword in hand, and watched them go past him. "But the sooner they are safe on board the better. Something's coming."

"That's so," responded mate Devoort from within the gate. "I guess we haven't any time to spare now. Those fellows are goin' to strike for 'em, sure's you live!"

"King Tom's a treacherous old beast!" growled Captain Wilton.

"We'll beat him, this time," said the mate.

If that dusky monarch had plotted to betray them, however, he had himself been betrayed in turn, by a Portuguese trader. They had learned from him, by paying him well, that the very Africans sold to them had been sold again to some British men-merchants whose vessel lay some distance up the river.

The double bargain had been made, nominally

by a brother of the King. In making it he had agreed that he and his black warriors would come with the gentlemen from England and ensure the delivery of the chattels sold.

"That means," said Captain Wilton, "the cutting of every throat on board the *Sumter*. They won't leave her afloat, either. Slaving is a ticklish business, after all. You can't trust one of these nigger kings."

The boats were going and coming rapidly and their trips were apparently unknown to the authorities of King Tom's Town. He and his counselors were conveniently within doors, that they might know nothing of the raid and robbery to be performed by his wicked brother.

Night was cooler than day on the Congo, and it was well to utilize the few hours which remained before the hot African sun should arise in its power. The landward gate had long since been closed and barred when Captain Wilton inquired, from a returning boat:

"How does the tally stand, mate?"

"Three hundred and ten in," said Devoort. "I guess we're to lose the other ten."

"Better let 'em have 'em than to run any great risk," said the Captain.

"Only thirty here. That makes 280 for the hold."

"My count exactly," replied Captain Wilton. "It's near daylight, now. Hullo! Devoort! They're coming! Steady, now, men. We must save these thirty, here."

Half of them were already packed in the long-boat and yawl, but the distance to the *Sumter* seemed, to those who rowed, to have become suddenly lengthened. At the easterly stockade of the town a terrible uproar was rising. The pointed wooden pickets had no human defenders, and over them were clambering, with ape-like agility, a swarm of black, devilish figures, armed with spears, clubs and shields. They had not come to attack either the town itself or King Tom and they halted within the stockade, yelling fiendishly and seeming to await some signal.

Captain Wilton was now on board the *Sumter* and he also was waiting.

"Let it get just a little lighter," he said. "I can hear oars well enough, even if they are muffled. They'll have cannon, too! Here they come! That's it!"

The report of a musket, fired well out upon the river, was a double signal and several parties acted upon it. Close around it, on the water, arose a chorus of shouts and yells, through which could be heard the order, in English:

"Board her at once! No quarter!"

The swarm on land at the stockade, also yelled and sprang forward, but it had an eighth of a mile to run and Devoort was crowding his last boat with living goods purchased from King Tom.

Another sound followed the musket signal. It was the booming report of the long thirty-two of the *Sumter*, choked to the muzzle with bags of bullets.

It was a dreadful storm to hurl among crowded boats and canoes. Before its effect could be known, moreover, the three nines on the side of the *Sumter* spoke out, one by one, well aimed at short range.

A few scattering musket shots responded, nearly drowned by cries of dismay and agony.

"Starboard, Devoort!" shouted Captain Wilton as the mate's boats pulled nearer.

"Aye, aye," and as he passed out of danger the landward nines poured their deadly grist among the fantastic throng of spearmen who were already charging the abandoned barracoon and stockade.

"All hands up anchor!" roared the captain, while Devoort and his boats' crews hurried their freight on board. "I guess we've checked 'em for a bit, but we must hurry out of this."

The sun was almost risen, but it was as if he came only to show how thick and yellow was the morning mist which floated over the surface of the muddy Congo. This was still operating, therefore, as a kind of curtain covering from observers on the *Sumter* the unknown black and white adventurers among whom had fallen the murderous hail from the guns of the schooner. It was not her captain or crew that had been taken by surprise.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MADELINE'S BIRTHDAY.

"TO-DAY she is twenty!"

Dr. Montanye sat before the great trunk in the corner of his own room. It was wide open and he was looking down upon its contents as if they were a book that he was reading.

There lay the morocco case with Richard Wilton's or Robert Bedford's turquoises in it. Close by it lay the oilsilk pad on which were plainly visible the stains of blood. An unsolved mystery of the sea. Under them in a sheath lay a sword with a silver hilt of elaborate workmanship. There were heavy belt pistols also and the doctor put down a hand and opened a rosewood case to stare at a pair of long, elegant duelling pistols. Clergymen never fought duels in those days. What were these for? What more in the way of curiosities, whether warlike or peaceful, was between the top and bottom of the mass of things in that old trunk?"

Almost as well might anyone have guessed the contents of the doctor's memory. He spoke of something stored away in that when he next

remarked, in a peculiarly low-voiced, intensified manner:

"Madeline will never know all. Her mother never knew. I wish God did not know—but he does. O, my God! Must all of a man's life be judged and condemned because of the evil of one part of it? That can not be the justice of God! It must be that in Him there is also forgiveness. O, that I myself could forget!"

Beads of perspiration were standing out upon his forehead, but it was nearly the time for him to go down to his breakfast, and he arose and closed the trunk.

His daughter had been an early riser that morning. It was a day to which she had looked forward with deep interest as well as with something resembling fear, for more reasons than one. She was expecting, dreading, an as yet unknown matter which it had promised to bring to her. She would have been more or less than a genuine young woman, during all those weeks, now lengthening into months, if she could have put out of her mind all thought concerning those gifts which were hidden away in the trunk, up stairs. She had thought of them all the more because she could not see them. Latterly, however, they had become fixed in her mind more and

more firmly, for obvious reasons, as gifts from Richard Wilton and not at all from another. It was a positive relief to wipe away one idea from the turquoises and put into its place something like contempt. Richard, on the other hand came back more distinctly to her thought and memory. He was Mrs. Wilton's son; he was her childhood friend and playmate; he was her near neighbor; he was a brave young fellow who was suffering terribly, now, because he had fought for his country—and her country. He was in this way unconsciously becoming a part of her life, and the process grew fast while she prayed so earnestly that he might escape from his enemies. He would, then, she thought, come back to New York and she could frankly explain to him why she could not and would not permit him to give her such presents. She was sure that she would be able to do so without hurting his feelings and she even studied methods and forms of speech for such an explanation.

She was busy with her thoughts, with them and a few finishing touches to her dress, before going down to greet her father at the breakfast table—on her birthday morning—when Mrs. Wilton quietly slipped in to kiss her and wish her all good—then she handed her something.

"That's it," she said. "Your mother gave it to me as I told you. I know nothing more about it. This is the day."

It was in Madeline's hand and Mrs. Wilton was gone, hurrying away as if she were in fear of further questioning. A paper envelope, like a letter, sealed very thoroughly and addressed to Madeline. That was all, and she slowly, timidly, thoughtfully tore it open.

"I seem to remember her more perfectly than I have for years and years," she thought. "I can almost see her."

It was indeed a letter, but it had no date. The writing, in a small, fine hand, had been written by fingers which were trembling. She could see that.

"Madeline, my daughter, my beloved girl," she read, "I am dying. You are too young now. When you read this, burn it. I pray, I hope, that you know nothing and will learn nothing. Something tells me that you surely will discover your father's secret. Keep it—before God! Hide it from yourself and from him. Do not judge him as you would not be judged. I did judge him and it has killed me. His error, his crime, is no fault of yours, that you should suffer for it. Madeline, when your father dies, let no one be

with you when you open his trunk. Oh, how I wish I had not opened it! I believe he is a good man in spite of everything. It cankered and wore me out. It will kill you if you let it kill you, just as it has killed me. Pray to God, my darling. Let Him keep it to the end if you can. Keep it yourself. God bless you. Good-bye, my daughter—"

That was all, and the first hot thought that came to Madeline was a horrid fear that her mother had been insane. All this did not read like the expression of a sound-minded person. Strangely enough, then came to her a strong feeling of relief.

"Oh, dear!" she whispered. "I'm so glad! I haven't really anything to be afraid of yet. I don't know any more than I did before. Why? I don't want to know! I'll burn it up instantly."

She did so and then she went down stairs. Her father had already made his appearance but he was not in the house. He was out on the piazza steps receiving something from the hand of a mounted British orderly.

"Give them my hearty thanks for their courtesy," she heard him say, and the orderly galloped off down the road.

She was relieved of any difficulty as to her

manner of meeting him, for he entered the house with a great deal of iron in his face, hardening specially at his mouth.

"A letter for you," he said, "forwarded from the army headquarters."

Madeline's own face clouded instantly. Then it crimsoned as she took the letter, but her eyes met his unflinchingly, with so indignant an expression that he at once put on a more contented, undisturbed look and said to her quietly:

"If you do not wish to read it now, keep it until after breakfast. Of course I can see whom it is from. I am familiar with his penmanship."

Without precisely such familiarity, she also understood that the letter from beyond the sea had been written by Robert Bedford.

"He'd no business to write to me!" she exclaimed. "I needn't answer him, anyhow. I believe I hate that man!"

She was truly in no haste to read it. On the other hand she was positively glad that breakfast time and a talk about other matters gave her a reprieve. The gallant Major might not have been well pleased if he had known of the manner in which his missive was received.

He was not a well-pleased man that morning for other reasons. Not only had the present

Baron Towton been reported as in somewhat better health, but Major Bedford's own regiment had been ordered, in his absence, to be transferred from New York to Halifax and at the latter place he would be compelled to join it, promptly. This might leave him nothing better than a chance to write many letters before he could hope for another call at the Montanye place.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHOT AT THE WHEEL.

IT WOULD not do to wait for whatever might be hidden under the yellow fog of the Congo. The *Sumter's* anchor had been ready for lifting and up it came. Up went the sails, also, and out swung her booms. There were no men to spare for the guns, just then, however, and they did not at once speak again. The last two boatloads of blacks cowered upon the deck in stupid amazement, there being no helping hand to take them to their place of safety in the hold. Brighter shone the rising sun, but denser seemed the fog blanket, for it was now thickened somewhat by powder smoke. Above it might shortly be seen the topmasts of what seemed to be a brig, slipping down the river. As for the boats among whose crews the hail from the *Sumter* had been scattered, they had ceased rowing and only a confused clamor of voices, some of them hideously profane, came from that direction.

On shore there was no mist to hide anything that was going on in King Tom's Town. Every living person there appeared to be in motion. All the huts poured out their inmates and even

the captives in the barracoons had been startled into stirring their manacled limbs and shouting to one another.

The barracoon at the water's edge hired for his temporary uses by Captain Wilton, was the only silent place during several minutes after the *Sumter's* broadside. This had been terribly effective and a number of dusky spearsmen lay mangled and writhing on the sun-baked earth. Almost as many had been killed outright and tremendous yells of wrath and dismay announced that among these was the brother of the king. He was the very man who had re-sold to the up-river trader the 330 choice "pieces" previously paid for by Captain Wilton. He had also planned and led the sunrise attack. His strategy and his financiering alike had failed dismally and so had those of the British purchasers.

While some of King Tom's men were discovering that the riverside barracoon was empty, the mist-hidden boats were pulling toward the brig.

The king himself, obese, bestial, a giant in size and an ogre in face, was standing in front of his palm-leaf thatched royal residence, glowering savagely toward the river. On either side and near him were neatly finished pyramids of skulls, his trophies and his glory, for his admirers frequently

flattered him with the assurance that these were every one the war winnings of his own right hand. This held a spear now, as was his royal custom, and behind him crept and cowered several of his wives. Evil it was, for one of them, a plump and comely young woman, that she came too near and actually touched him when he was in his rage. The spear flashed quickly back and forth and he had wasted one of his most attractive properties, for she was cloven through the heart. Her fate was vastly better, however, than would be that of all the wives of his slain brother, for these would surely be buried alive with his shot-torn carcass.

After all there was an appearance of reason and humanity in some of the arguments presented by Rev. Dr. Montanye and other patriotic Americans. They might plausibly aver that even if one-half of every human cargo should perish during its voyage, the average life of the whole number would be prolonged by capture and transfer to a less murderous description of bondage. Either North or South American or West Indian plantation life was vastly better than any kind of existence which could be obtained among the African forests. Sometimes however, it was said, the hold of a ship might set free as many by deaths assuredly during a long calm, as could King Toms'

hunters and the other wild beasts of the Dark Continent.

"We're all right now," said Captain Wilton, as the light wind filled the sails of the *Sumter*. "Give that brig a solid shot, mate. Hit her if you can."

Devoort and a squad of men were at the long thirty-two while others were charging the broadside guns.

The stranger spoke first, but her gunners had not yet obtained the range and their shot went wide of the intended mark.

"Fired by lubbers!" exclaimed Devoort. "We'll show 'em Yankee privateer practice."

Loud rang out the pivot gun, but no human being was harmed by the carefully aimed shot. Only the mainmast of the brig was killed, so to speak, and as it toppled over and came crashing down, the *Sumter* sent across the water the iron messengers of her three nine pounders of that broadside. Then she swept away swiftly down the river toward the Atlantic.

"I almost wish Dick were here," his father had said more than once. "He could learn a great many things."

Well might he wish that Dick was out of his present circumstances, if not on the coast of

Africa, for the young sailor was in a very bad place indeed. He was even worse off than was Sam Green, for that remarkable British tar had taken a new position since his flogging. It had been serpent wisdom on his part to show so plainly that he "had no feelings" and he was treated accordingly. No idea of that kind had attached to Richard Wilton for he had actually commanded an American armed vessel and all men knew that he could not forget it.

First Lieutenant Gregg, especially, more than any other of the *Ascalon's* officers, exhibited a sort of relentless animosity. Dick performed well all duties that were assigned him. He was self-controlled under almost intolerable abuse and injustice. Cursed and kicked and cuffed, ordered to almost any disagreeable or ignominious service and then punished as if for offences, he had resolutely endured all in silence. So much the more it seemed he was an object of hatred and suspicion to his superiors. They knew that he had been wronged and that he must surely hate them.

They were entirely correct in their general reasoning, but its practical effects were concentrated in the hands of the first lieutenant, since all the other officers were by no means of his

pattern. They were as determined concerning discipline, but were also English gentlemen and brave seamen.

The misfortune was that the first lieutenant is always the executive officer of a man-of-war. Captain Vaile was a man to leave all he could to his next in command, although he himself kept a sharp eye on Dick. This, too, was with reference to a possible future rather than to the past or the present, while his very rank prevented him from coming frequently in the neighborhood of a mere common sailor.

The *Ascalon* cruised hither and thither after leaving New York. She entered harbor after harbor and the general opinion of those on board of her was that she was a lucky ship, a good one to sail in. She was indeed a fine specimen of British shipbuilding and she was invariably handled well, for Captain Vaile and his officers were prime seamen.

Nevertheless, the best of seamanship has no control over the weather and it can not put away such freaks of nature as reefs and islands. The West India charts of that day had by no means obtained their present minute perfection and therefore all hidden dangers were to be watched for.

At the very hour when Captain Mark Wilton, with his own hands, was cautiously steering the *Sumter* down the Congo and thinking of his son Richard, the *Ascalon*, so many hundreds of miles away, leaned over almost dangerously under the pressure of a sudden tempest. "Devoort," remarked Captain Wilton, "I shall have loads to tell Dick. When he comes hereaway, he must be sure and bring hands enough to work his guns."

"We are getting away, pretty well, from these British fellers," replied the mate. "I wish we had sunk that brig. We did her some mischief, anyhow."

"The peace will be all right, then," said the captain. "He will be entirely safe at sea."

Dick was at sea, now, and the British were with him, and he was not entirely safe. Even Captain Vaile himself was exclaiming to his next in command:

"Gregg, this has been one of the worst and most sudden gales I ever saw. We are out of our course, too."

"Breakers a lee!" shouted back the lieutenant. "They're awful! We can weather 'em, though, if she can stand her canvas."

"She must," said the captain. "Out with it, if we lose a spar!"

"Curse this chart," said Gregg. "We don't know where we are. That Yankee! That fellow Green! I must ask him. I'll go on deck. I wish you would come, sir."

It was time for him to do so. The gale was rising furiously, and so was the sea. The rigging of the *Ascalon* had already suffered severely. An upward glance told the captain that spars were missing. The starboard boats were stove in. The ship herself was as stanch as ever and was riding well, but away ahead of her a practiced eye could discern, without a glass, long lines of foam which did not belong to the crests of mere billows.

"Green!" said Captain Vaile, "do you know this navigation or where we are?"

"As well as Captain Wilton himself, sir," said Green, referring to Dick, not to his father. "We've both been on the lookout."

"Where are we, then?" asked Vaile, not noting the red flush in Gregg's face at the title given by Sam to the stalwart young sailor beside him.

"There's no name to them reefs," replied Sam. "There's an easterly key that I've had to beat around more'n once. You're goin' to sure ruin jest now. There's a pass, but it's a narrow chance to get through with a heavy craft like this."

"Silence, Gregg!" said the Captain. "Can you pilot her, Green?"

"Give the wheel to Dick Wilton and I'll con the ship," said Sam. "I guess we can do it, if there's water enough on the bar when we get there. It's 'cordin' to the tide."

"What if there isn't?" asked Gregg.

"Then you'd better have the boats ready," said Sam. "Only they couldn't live in this sea. I guess we'd all go."

"Wilton," roared the captain, "take the wheel! Green, you are pilot. Heave ahead!"

"I guess I am," said Green, "but if I wasn't here, though, or Dick, the whole ship's company'd go somewhere else."

The captain walked away, holding by one catch after another and anxiously studying his damaged top-hamper.

Lieutenant Gregg remained. He was a good seaman and he could obey Captain Vaile's orders, but there was an exceedingly ugly look on his face.

"Look me in the eye," he said to Dick. "You pirate! If the *Ascalon* touches her keel, I'll shoot you where you stand!"

If a look of hate and in it a spice of scorn could have shot a man, Lieutenant Gregg would have dropped, but Dick said nothing and shortly

the *Ascalon* was bowling along with one 'pressed Yankee at the wheel while another was watching sea and wind and sails and directing the steersman more by motions of his hands than by speech, hard to hear in the tumult of the tempest.

Nearer, nearer to the foaming danger the good ship battled on. All on board knew the peril. The sailors generally trusted their two pilots and Captain Vaile returned to stand, calmly and bravely, to note their management and to abide the result. After all, there was a great deal to admire in him. Near the wheel, now, stood Lieutenant Gregg, with a hand on the pistol at his belt.

Could there be any available passage through that line of tossing foam? The *Ascalon* could bear no more sail or she might have been given another course. Here was all the hope left her.

What! Was she through it?

No! Not perfectly. There was a sudden grating, a slight jar, that sent a shudder through all the ship and through the hearts of men.

Fierce and senseless was the lieutenant's curse as he jerked out his pistol and a loud report followed the oath. The *Ascalon* had not struck. She was swiftly gliding on into the smooth water beyond the reefs.

"Saved! We have saved her!" shouted Sam Green. "She only grazed her keel! God bless Dick Wilton! The best steersman!"

"Lieutenant Gregg," said Captain Vaile, with white faced anger, "if you had hit that man, the *Ascalon* would have broached to and every soul on board would have been lost!"

"Sam," exclaimed Dick. "Take the wheel! Quick! The lubberly coward did hit me! I'm shot, but I've saved the ship!"

As the *Ascalon* lurched a little, Dick staggered and fell heavily to the deck.

"Carry him below and call the surgeon," said Captain Vaile. "He held on until she had passed the reef. Gregg, you will pay dearly for this!"

"Murdered for bein' a hero," hissed Sam Green grinding his teeth, but strongly clinging to the wheel.

Lieutenant Gregg was silent, but a voice from among the men forward reached him:

"He shall pay for it some day!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON SEA AND SHORE.

IT was in her own room, alone, that Madeline read her letter from Robert Bedford. At the time of writing it, and as an excuse, he said, for doing so, he had learned that he was not to return at once, although even then he was not aware that his regiment had been ordered to Halifax and that his temporary "Staff" duty had terminated. He had enough to say, however, concerning unavoidable delay, long absence and that sort of thing, to afford Madeline a pleasurable sensation of relief. She almost enjoyed obtaining from him precisely that information, but she was reading his letter altogether more wisely than he could have suspected. It was an out and out love letter, composed with care and sent under a strong conviction that it was an effective piece of work. So it was, telling much in what it said and more in what it did not say.

A great many experienced people are aware how that can be done, and Madeline knew a great deal more than she had been willing to know of Major Robert Bedford when, at last, she

passionately threw the paper on the floor and put her foot on it.

"The false hearted villain!" she exclaimed.

After that she thought abundantly and did not utter another word aloud. When she went down and met her father, she answered his look of inquiry with:

"I'm so thankful. He won't be in New York again for ever so long?"

For once, for a rarity, Rev. Dr. Montanye actually laughed aloud. He also felt a great sense of relief, although he had at no time doubted Madeline. As to Mrs. Wilton, she was wise enough to say nothing whatever, in his presence, except to remark hopefully, that the British army was already beginning its preparations for departure. Some portions of it were even now ready and were going soon, but it had so long been a resident, so to speak, of Manhattan Island, seven years, ever since the summer of 1776, that it had acquired a settled feeling and found it uncomfortable to migrate. It had in fact taken root in many ways and all its roots were now to be pulled up. At the same time the city itself was becoming more and more conscious that it was soon to be liberated. One of its native born citizens felt deeply and spoke fervently about the matter.

"Lobster all get away!" growled the old Pequot, gloomily. "Wassin'ton men no come 'calp 'em. Bedford get away. 'Calp on head. Ugh! Mebbe he come again. Sassago watch. Want he 'calp!"

As for Nanny, she seemed to be feeling more secure, in spite of Sassago's occasional assurances that the ship which was to take her was already in the harbor.

One ship that he knew and wished to see again had already, on Madeline's birthday, been compelled to postpone any idea of an immediate cruise northward. The *Ascalon* had weathered the gale and she had also escaped the reef, thanks to Dick Wilton and Sam Green, but her commander was hurrying her to Havana, for repairs, under all the sail she could bear.

Poor Dick! The days were dark for him. The ship's surgeon was a man of skill and experience and at first he shook his head over the red mark of Lieutenant Gregg's pistol bullet.

"Thank God!" he remarked shortly. "It went clear through. Breathe again, my man. Slowly, now. That's it! That's a great deal!"

Dick could breathe and the surgeon gave his opinion that the lung close to which the ball had passed was uninjured.

"He may get well," he reported to the captain. "But it's a narrow chance."

"I sincerely hope he will," replied Captain Vaile. "It was a foolish thing for Gregg to do. He lost his head."

If justice had been done him he would have lost something more, but many violent and cruel things might be done, as that was, almost with impunity, covered by the general plea of the needful discipline of a British man-of-war. What, after all, was the value of the life of a Yankee pirate who might even yet be tried, convicted and hung? Even Captain Vaile remarked to himself:

"Well! If Wilton goes by the board, we must keep a closer hold on Green. He is really the best witness in the Bedford affair, unless it should be old Wilton, and we haven't caught him yet."

Faint and far away, therefore, were Richard Wilton's chances for ever again getting a glimpse of the city he was born in. Still, as he lay and panted in the sick bay of the ship, while his fever grew hotter and the air more close and oppressive, his thoughts went northward. He knew that his own home, the Wilton farmhouse, had long since disappeared, but from childhood he had been familiar with every acre of the Montanye place and with the interior of the

house itself. His mother was there now. He might never see her again. Madeline was there, very beautiful, a grown-up woman, talking with his mother, and he wished he could see her and hear her talk. He remembered, too, her grim, sedate-mannered father, for whom he had a great deal of respect. Dick thought all sorts of thoughts about them all, and a sicker feeling came to him with his regret relating to his turquoises.

"O! How I wish she could have them;" he said to himself. "Some English woman is to wear them, I suppose. Well, mother has that oil-silk thing, whatever there is in it, and she will give it to Madeline. Ought I not to have given everything to mother? No. Father is really rich, now, and he must be there by this time. He can take care of her."

It was just as well that he did not know precisely how his mysterious memento had been managed and guided by old Sassago, or what had been done with it in consequence.

Dr. Montanye had not said anything more concerning that matter. He had many others upon his mind for he was carefully maintaining his friendly relations with the British army men while slowly detaching himself from any apparent intimacy with them. At the same time he had

much intercourse with the fast awakening mercantile community. The great remaining hindrance in this direction was the fact that New York was still under martial law and strict military and naval supervision. It was not yet a port of the United States, with arrangements for receiving and clearing merchant ships and cargoes. Other cities, like Boston and Philadelphia, were, therefore, getting ahead of New York. So was Baltimore, especially, but the other two obtained a start which enabled them to keep the lead during twenty years that followed. New Yorkers with money in their pockets, however, even if they had made it out of the British supply business, or by patriotic privateering, could use it at other ports.

No American armed vessel, such as a slaver, could enter New York harbor, but, if owned in that city, she could sail from New London, for instance, just as well. Perhaps there were even more slaves provided for from Manhattan Island because its merchants were for so long a time almost debarred from other commercial enterprises.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FEVER AND THIRST.

THE *Sumter* had sustained no harm whatever in getting away from the Congo River and King Tom's Town. She was homeward bound now, without the loss of a white man and with only twenty black "pieces" less on board than had been paid for by Captain Wilton.

Losing even that number at the outset, however, made him disposed to be more careful of the remaining three hundred and ten valuable bodies that were stowed away in the hold.

Nothing was said by him or by anybody else to indicate an idea that so many additional "souls" were on board the schooner besides her crew. It was easier, unquestionably, to handle perishable freight without also handling an unnecessary assertion that it was human.

"I'm really glad we haven't more of 'em," was Captain Wilton's deliberate judgment. "They're a'most too crowded, now, and they're the thirstiest lot I ever came across. I've a notion, though, that plenty of water is the thing to keep off the fever."

An excellent thing is water, even if it be warm and carries with it a taste of an old barrel and of

things which it had contained previously. African pools themselves may also be warm and odorous. Old meat or the brine of it can hardly impart anything worse than a native African may be supposed to be familiar with.

Air is another excellent thing, sea air, but not an over-supply for each pair of lungs could be sent down into the steaming hold of the *Sumter* as her wide white wings bore her away from the sullen coast of the Dark Continent. During a few days thereafter there was abundant air on deck. The sails were well filled and the swift schooner danced along westward in a manner that was a promise of profits to come. If this were to be the character of their voyage, the imprisoned passengers, or freight, would in all probability survive for future usefulness and civilization—such as may be obtained under the lashes of plantation overseers. They would also do something for civilized and Christian finances and they were an excellent type of an important commercial development.

The brightness of this promise lessened somewhat at the end of the *Sumter's* first week out. The winds became baffling and variable. Then they were fainter, fainter, feeble, fitful, until they were diminished to mere puffs which wrought

no sparkling crests upon the long slow rolls of the glancing sea. The sun grew more powerful as the wind died away. The heat on deck became intense, so that even the hard hands of the sailors withdrew quickly from careless touches of any sunlit iron work. Even planks and spars were almost too hot for handling.

Down in the hold were those whose lives had been passed in denser air and greater heat than white men might long endure, but now the foul smelling hollow they lay in was becoming a kind of sunken furnace.

"They've got to be fetched up, a squad at a time," said Captain Wilton, "or we shall lose some of 'em."

Up they came, therefore, and their first impulses, every one, the poor wild creatures that they were, on reaching the deck, were to stare vacantly around upon the ship and the sea and the sky. They had been down in the dark, and even now they knew not whither their strange fate had carried them. Were they to be killed and eaten? They knew not. Was this another world from the forest world in which they had been born and where the hunters of King Tom had captured them?

They were not unmanacled, but they were

liberally watered and fed, for they were valuable stock, and hardly any of them failed to show the hurtful effect of their prison life, both in the barracoons on shore and in the hold of the schooner. They liked this change very much and they drew long breaths of the hot sea air as if, after all, it were exceedingly refreshing.

All of this, however, was a luxury which might not be given to more than two score of them at a time and only for a few short hours. After that, each company had to be sent down into the pit again and another was brought up.

This was an unpleasant duty for the crew, but they had hardly any other upon their hands, for now the wind died and the *Sumter's* rudder swung uselessly to and fro as she floated this way, that way, through the dead calm upon which the blazing sun looked pitilessly down.

It was by no means as hot as this in the sick bay of the *Ascalon*, at Havana, where Dick Wilton was lying and slowly recovering power to breathe freely with all his lungs. At first it had not been easy for Sam Green to come and see him, but he found an opportunity one day when Midshipman Jack Mackenzie was on duty at that post.

"It's been a narrer call," said Sam, as he

leaned over and looked down almost tenderly, lovingly upon the pale face of his friend.

"It isn't so close as the surgeon thinks," said Dick. "I believe I'm going to get well right along. But O! How hot it is!"

"You bet," said Sam. "It's awful! The old *Ascalon* won't be ready for sea very soon, though. She was badly knocked about in that gale. They'll have to put her in the dry dock, too, to mend her keel."

"I say, Sam," whispered Dick, "cut it if you find a chance. Get out o' this."

"Not and leave you here," responded Sam. "I ain't mean enough for that. Sally'd never forgive me if I'd deserted ye. Besides it wouldn't be o' much use to get away here 'mong the Spaniards. They'd give me up on demand. And that isn't all of it, my boy—." his face grew strangely stony, just then, although he was a man who said of himself that he had no feelings. "I've an account to settle with one or two men before I go. So have you. Now! You jest wait and see if I don't get square with Gregg and old Vaile."

"Look out, Sam," said Dick. "Don't pay too much for a settlement."

"I guess they'll pay," said Sam. "I'll jest

collect damages. They flogged Sam Green and they meant to murder you, and they'll do their best to hang both of us, one of these days. Somebody else'll die before I do. I must go now."

So Dick was left alone and the fever that came upon him did not belong altogether to his wound nor to the stifling heat of the sick bay.

"Sam'll have his revenge," he thought. "So will I!—I want to get well. They had no right to rob me of my freedom and make a man-o'-war British slave of me. Gregg did that. So did Captain Vaile. Gregg is a murderer. Both of them are men-stealers. Any man-stealer is a murderer. He ought to be shot or hung. I mean to be free again when I get well, if I have to kill somebody. I'm with Sam Green! Every man has a right to his liberty."

No such thought as that, however, could by any possibility find its way down into the fetid, noisome hold of his own father's slave schooner, the *Sumter*, rolling around in that boiling calm on the African sea. Something else had gone down there, on the sixth day after the beginning of the calm.

This thing had no visible shape, but it was, nevertheless, something wan, spectral, terrific. It passed along the row of fettered captives until it

came to one large built, brawny black man and it touched him. He had been a warrior among his own wild hillsmen of the African interior. This was his first experience of captivity, or of the sea, or of white men, and he knew not how greatly such muscular men as he were needed by western agriculture and growth and civilization. He did not really care about such things. He had no personal interest in the future of any white man's fortune. He had drank and eaten more sullenly than some of the others and with an occasional spasmodic jerk at his fetters. He had been as silent as the calm sea itself until that thing came and touched him. Shortly afterward he tried to rise to his feet, but fell back, laughing, to break out, a few minutes later, into fierce, discordant yells which had in them suggestions of battle cries and of the fierce wrath of savage combat. This might be appropriate, indeed, for all the wild life left in him was wrestling with the destroying malady known among slave merchants as their enemy, the Congo fever. It was said to come on board their ships from the mangrove swamps at night. It would also visit barracoons, but its favorite course was to hide for a while in hot holds and come out of its concealment far at sea.

Wherever it now came from, its work had begun. It laid its skeleton hand upon another and and another of the dusky dwellers in the hold of the *Sumter*. The next day it came on deck and began to walk around among the crew. They were not so ready for it as the blacks had been, for they had not been prepared before hand in any barracoon and they had not slept in their own hold. One after another, however, stalwart ex-privateersmen felt a desire to lie down, accompanied by strange heats and shivers. They each begged not to be taken below and awnings were spread over their couches, so that the deck of the *Sumter* became a hospital. The very roll of the ship grew sickening and the idly flapping sails seemed to have fever in them.

A horrid sameness took possession of the slowly marching days and now anyone looking over the rail was sure to see the black fin of a shark. Those weird and dreadful fish are said to obtain in some inscrutable way, a knowledge beforehand when plunges are to come over the side of a ship at sea.

Very soon there were plunges, such as the sharks had waited for. At first all these were of unshrouded black forms, mere wastage of freight. After that followed more than one shape that was

vague because of being bound in a hammock, with a round shot at its feet that it might go down into the depths. As if it could sink so rapidly that the rush of a shark would not overtake it!

"Cap'n," said Mate Devoort, "the water's goin'. We're on short allowance a'ready. Where'll we be, pretty soon, if this 'ere keeps on?"

"I'm afraid there'll be enough for all that'll be left," was the captain's gloomy response. "The fewer throats, the better, if this calm doesn't break. I'd be glad the fever came if it wasn't for the boys. We'd ha' had to—"

There he paused, for he was not altogether a hardened man and he knew what some slavers had been forced to do with their cargoes in calms after the water gave out.

"Whoop!" a wild shout came from one of the sick men, with his head out at the side of his canvas shelter. "Sail! Hurrah, boys! Wind comin'! Too late! Ah—h—" for his fever strength went from him and he fell back, fainting.

No man, whether sick or well, can see a coming wind, but they had almost ceased to keep a look-out and away easterly, at the horizon, there was a darkening of sky and sea.

"Coming! Thank God!" exclaimed Captain Wilton. We must be ready for it. What's that? O, Heavens!"

Was it a sail? Yes, loosely flapping sails on booms that swung lazily with the pitch and roll of a schooner not unlike their own. She drifted almost within hail during the next few minutes, for a puff of air aided her drifting and the *Sumter* might now steer toward her. The light wind had reached her first, but no human shape arose from her deck to make use of it. No voice came from her. Nothing but an awful odor, too strong for endurance, so that the *Sumter* was hastily steered out of it. The British flag was at the stranger's peak and now, as she yawed around, her name could be plainly read.

"*Dolphin!*" said Devoort. "She sailed out of the Congo two weeks before we did. She had nigh five hundred head o' slaves on board, more'n she ought to ha' tried to carry. It's o' no use, Captain Wilton. That there steersman fell at the wheel. See him? We're too late!"

"Too late!" gasped the captain. "We havn't a drop to spare, even if it would do them any good. There isn't a man alive on that craft. If the crew went, then there was nobody to take down water to the blacks. There're gone. Awful!"

They made themselves well assured that this conclusion was correct, and then the *Sumter*

sailed westward before a rising gale, leaving behind her one more instructive example of the losses which might be suffered by merchants in the African trade.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RETURN OF THE "ASCALON."

SEPTEMBER came and with it, from beyond the sea, came ample assurances that the final treaty of peace between the United States and England would soon be signed. Its actual date was the second of the month, but weeks elapsed before that fact could be published, officially, in America. Even before its announcement, the National Convention, on the seventeenth, adopted the Constitution of the United States. The framers of that instrument, were, in one respect, not unlike Dr. Montanye's friends, merchants, by occupation, of what was still the British port of New York. The Constitution prudently avoided any open recognition of either slavery or the slave trade, while not refusing to permit the country to profit, for a time, from the increasing activities of the African trade. Slave ships, therefore, might come and go, landing their cargoes elsewhere, and the future of slavery was left to take care of itself at whatever cost of blood and treasure the nation might yet be called upon to pay.

It was hard for Great Britain, by the hands of

her King and Parliament, to put away forever her claim upon this, the fairest part of her dominions. Her enforced separation from her former colonies was submitted to slowly, reluctantly, haughtily, in a manner calculated to keep alive all the bitter animosities engendered by the war for independence. At no previous time had the people of the United States felt so intensely their resentful hate for England as they now did in the very hour of triumph. They had suffered much and they were still too sore to forgive, while every added, needless insult or injury, by sea or land, was felt as keenly as a lost battle may have been during active war operations.

A species of polite sullenness took the place of any former neighborly sociability between the British garrison, whether officers or men, and that part of the population of New York which expected to remain there. The more pronounced Tories, especially the rich ones, were preparing to go, or had already gone ; for England, not America, was really their home, and King George III. was their King.

They were, however, to have a continuous sucession of American imitators in the days which were to come.

During all the pleasant summer, Madeline

Montanye had plotted and skirmished for complete retirement and her father had helped her without saying a word about it. He knew that other letters, like the first, had arrived from time to time. He was aware, too, that Major Bedford was at Halifax and that no answering epistles had gone from Madeline to Nova Scotia to find him.

"There is a great deal in that girl," he had remarked of her with fatherly pride. "I am glad to see that she possesses unusual firmness of character."

She was a woman, nevertheless, not a man. Her life since a girlhood which had seemed to end at the beginning of the war, had not been like that of most other young women. When at times she looked back and thought of it, she could perceive that a great revolution came to her, one awful day in the summer of 1776. She remembered every hour of that day with painful distinctness. The patriot army under Washington, disastrously defeated on Long Island, had escaped across the East River in the night. She remembered that her father remained quietly at home, all that day, very thoughtful, very much depressed, but avoiding conversation. Mrs. Wilton came to the house for safety, and her son Richard came with her, wild with boyish wrath over Washington's defeat.

He had declared his fierce determination to go and fight the British to the end. She remembered exactly how he looked, soon afterwards, when he said goodbye to his mother and when she had admired him so much as a boy hero. Of course, all this became connected with several beautiful things which were now hidden away in her father's trunk.

Perhaps it was partly because the British were soon to go, that she recalled with a keen interest the manner of their coming in. She then had listened, with dreadful anxiety, to the distant cannonading at Kip's Bay. After that she had watched from her window the long columns of the Continentals, retreating up the island. Only a little later came the Harlem battle in which Knowlton fell. The British and Hessians, some of them, had marched to that fight across the Montanye farm. Not long afterward, the doctor's own slaves had been taken from him and it was several days before he could obtain their restoration.

They all returned, but Nanny came back gloomy and sullen, not at all the same merry-hearted black woman. Sassago was sore and lame from a severe flogging which had been given him, and Madeline had tried to comfort him, mere

child as she was. Ever since then there had been softening of the fire in his sunken black eyes whenever he looked at her. He understood that if he belonged to her she also belonged to him, she had cried so hard over his flogging.

This disturbed, unusual life which Madeline had lived begun in England, for her mother was an English woman. Into it now a romance had crept. There was something confused and perplexing about this romance, for among its features was the idea of a secret, terrible, mysterious, in the history of her own father, whom she had so utterly trusted.

"It can not possibly be anything wrong," she thought. "The kindest, best of men! He does not even treat the servants as if he owned them. I am so glad that he was a patriot all the while! But who would have thought it?"

Not any of the British officers, assuredly, and more than one of them condoled with Dr. Montanye concerning the hard times which might come to him after he should be deprived of the protection of King George's army and of the fleet which was so soon to sail away.

Dr. Montanye accepted their well-meant warnings placidly, barely suggesting that clergymen and scholars were a privileged class of non-com-

batants and that he himself was a very retired and quiet kind of man.

Nevertheless, as the bright September days went by in a slow and dreamy procession, Madeline felt that the romance of her life was deepening. It was also flowing on, riverlike, toward some inevitable change. It was several weeks since she had ventured down into the city, and at the close of one fair afternoon her father rode in at the carriage gateway with an appearance of haste. He did not draw his rein until just before he sprang to the ground at the piazza steps where she was standing to meet him.

"Madeline!" he exclaimed, "the *Ascalon* is in port! Captain Vaile is still in command of her. One other man is here—"

"Major Bedford?" sprang to her lips.

"To look after a detachment of his regiment that was left here," he added.

"Father!" she said. "Look here! Who can that be—coming in?"

A one-horse wagon was indeed arriving. In the wagon was a seaman's chest, large, made of mahogany, brass-fastened, and on it sat a man who seemed to sit up only by a strong effort, his pallid face turned wistfully toward the horse.

"Mark!" screamed the voice of Mrs. Wilton,

behind them. "Mark, are you sick? O, Dr. Montanye—"

Pale and wasted, truly, was the once stalwart sea-captain. Sassago was already at the side of the wagon, with a colored man to help him. As they lifted the captain down with kindly care he feebly said to his wife:

"African fever, dear. I went twice. I don't think I can go again. Dick must command the *Sumter* on the next voyage. Where is Dick?"

"Don't talk!" said Mrs. Wilton, frantically. "We must get you to bed! Dick isn't here!"

Dr. Montanye was now in charge, calm and steady, and Captain Wilton and his chest were carried up stairs.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SAM GREEN GOT EVEN.

THE *Ascalon* was now anchored near her old berth in the Upper Bay and her first day was as quiet as if she had lain there all summer.

That evening was quiet at the Montanye place also. Captain Wilton was in a feverish, half-delirious condition, and was as yet unable to give a very distinct account of himself. Neither Madeline nor her father cared to talk about the unexpected arrivals in the British army and navy.

"I must find if Richard Wilton is still on board the *Ascalon*," was one remark made by Dr. Montanye.

He was now in his own room. It was a sleeping room and it was also a study, well supplied with books, but he had not opened any of these. He was sitting in a chair near a window. He was not looking out, however, for his eyes were wandering unsteadily back and forth from his trunk to the spot in the chimney behind which there were several loose bricks.

"Every time this pain in my side comes on," he said half aloud, "I begin to worry about that stuff. I wish it were gone. I mean to buy more

land with some of it as soon as things are settled so that the land transfers can be made. I can get land cheap, too. I've had to keep it where it is, thus far. We have spent some of it—not much. I feel as if there is a curse on it, too. No doubt Captain Wilton has made money in his African ventures. I'd rather make mine that way and get entirely rid of all this."

He did not offer a syllable of real explanation. It was plain, however, that his mental trouble was not now the looseness of the chimney bricks; not even concerning the treasure itself which lay behind them. What could it be that he was maundering over?

As to one of his questions, Richard Wilton was still on board the *Ascalon*. The ship was as good as new after her refitting at the Havana, but he was not. Lieutenant Gregg's bullet mark had healed over so that his intended victim had been returned to duty as a seaman, but that officer's malignant animosity had by no means healed. It showed itself in a thousand ways, as Dick rapidly recovered strength. More than one kick and cuff and many a brutal curse had justified Sam Green in warning his friend:

"Don't you see? he wants to make you do or say something that he can call mutinous and send

you to the gratings. He'd love to give you a cat-o'-nine-tails. I'm goin' to give him somethin' else, yet."

Dick had endured in silence. It had been easier to do so at sea, however, than it now was in the harbor of his own city. His eager eyes wandered hopelessly along the shore from one well remembered point to another. It was not at all strange that when he thought of his mother and hoped that his father might be with her, he half dreamed that sitting with them, at times, was also a young woman whose face he could not picture.

"Well," he thought. "I suppose I shall never see Madeline. I'd like to. I wonder if she is as beautiful as mother says? I must stay and die in this British hell!"

It was nothing but a heart sick young fellow's dream of the only woman of whom he had ever dreamed at all, but his watch on deck, that night, was mainly spent in staring through the gloom toward the city he was never to enter. He was drinking a bitter cup, and he was compelled to taste it again, next morning, when first a large boat and then a small one came pulling to the side of the *Ascalon*. From the first came gaily over the rail, in full regimentals, no less a person-

age than Major Robert Bedford. He was heartily welcomed by Captain Vaile, of course, and was invited to the cabin. The two old friends would have gone down at once but for a passenger in the smaller boat, for the sailors knew Sassago and had helped him on board.

"Heap good fish for Captain Vaile! Ugh!" he remarked, for he was near enough. "Old Pequot know ship. Come see 'em again."

He had not fished that lot with hook or net. It had not even been easy to get them by purchase, but Dr. Montanye had paid the actual fisherman very liberally and here they were.

"Hullo, Sassago!" exclaimed Major Bedford. "You here! Good luck! I must send a message by you to your mistress."

"Sassago take 'em," grunted the Pequot. "Bedford no 'teal Cap'n Vaile fish."

A hearty laugh from the captain and the major answered the grim, drawn grin which was all that Sassago could muster.

"I won't steal that catch," said the major. "But you must bring me some."

"Ugh!" said Sassago. "Go catch 'em pretty quick. All in water."

Further instructions were given him as to his deliveries of fish and Sassago turned away for his

proposed inspection of the *Ascalon*, just as if he had seen nothing already. Nothing upon that deck had really escaped him and his next errand did not concern guns or rigging. He did but stroll around until he was near a pair of sailors who were standing motionless who did not seem to know that he was on board. Other sailors, meantime, chaffed him roughly but good humoredly, while in all his responses he spoke of them as "lubbers," as if he knew no other name for the seamen of a British man-of-war.

Well forward were those two men and they were busied with some duty or other which absorbed them when a low voice beside them remarked:

"Old Wilton safe at Montanye place. Old woman want to see boy. Boy come soon. Sassago in canoe. 'Trike light two time. 'Top. 'Trike one more. Heap tide. Keep eye open all night. Boy swim?"

Dick nodded, while a strong thrill ran over him and the Pequot slowly sauntered on.

"That's it," said Sam. "Your chance'll come."

"Yours, too," replied Dick. "It's for both of us. I won't leave you. I can swim like a fish. Can you?"

"Well, I can," said Sam. "Shut up, now,

but take your chance when it comes. I shall take mine, if I get one. I'd hate to go, too, without settling accounts with Gregg."

They could not safely say any more, for others were coming and going near them. Sassago went over the side and pushed away. The little craft he was in was neat, trim, swift-looking and he was paddling it in Indian fashion.

Down in the cabin sat Captain Vaile and the major, exchanging questions and answers, with a result which promised bad luck to any plan which Sassago and his friends might be arranging.

"When I call at Montanye's," said the major, "I think I can discover if there are any tidings of the elder Wilton."

"If you can get any and if you can find him," replied the captain, "arrest him and send him on board. I think it would be well to lock up Green and the younger Wilton."

"They must not be permitted to get away," said his friend, with emphasis.

"Exactly," said the captain, "and your golden-haired beauty shall have the best state room on the *Ascalon*. You must have her ready when we sail."

So planned and plotted these two devoted friends, but that day they did nothing, after all,

for they were under a pressure of official duties from which they could not escape.

It was Lieutenant Gregg's evening on shore and he was not to return, until a late hour, from a convivial meeting with a jolly company of officers from the other ships in the harbor. They were not likely to be altogether fitted to face sudden emergencies after a carouse at Fraunce's tavern.

Dick and Sam were clear headed enough, although their watch on deck proved to be a dark one. It even threatened to be rainy.

"I wish it wouldn't begin to drip jest yet," said Sam. "I guess we could see a flash, though. There! That's right!"

They were well forward, leaning over as if to look at the strong tide that was setting northerly, upon the East River, and Sam had been carefully gearing a rope which was long enough to trail in the water.

"We could go down without making any splash," he said. "What's that?"

"Why, it's Gregg," replied Dick. "He took the cutter. See? He isn't exactly drunk, but he's ugly. Hear him swear!"

"We must go and help hoist the cutter," said Sam. Look yonder!"

He pointed, but Dick was already looking, for out in the gloom, not a hundred yards from the ship, they could catch the faint glimmer of such a shower of sparks as flint and steel may make, in skilful hands.

"That's Sassago!" whispered Dick. "Our time has come! Follow me!"

Sam was silent, but he stepped quickly away and was at the side of the lieutenant, as he came on board, at the moment when Dick, without any lingering or hesitation, slipped over the side and down the rope, hand over hand, to the water. The cutter already swung at the davits, ready to be swung in, the lieutenant stood still as if he were steadying himself, for some reason, when a loud shout was heard forward.

"Man overboard! Deserter!"

That was followed by a musket shot from a sentry, a marine, who at once blazed away at the river.

"Lower away!" roared Gregg, leaning on the rail somewhat. "Down with the cutter! Catch him! Shoot him!"

Several more wild shots were fired. Orders were shouted. A dozen men rushed toward the cutter, but the hand on its bow-tackle may have been that of Sam Green. If so, he must have

let it slip through his fingers, for away it went, and the boat's head dropped into the water while its stern was yet in the air.

A savage curse burst from Gregg and with it came a blow which almost felled Sam, but, as the lieutenant recovered his balance after striking, a strong hand pushed his fingers away from their grasp at the bulwark. He felt himself suddenly lifted and his arms went wildly out as he was pitched backward, plunging down head foremost into the rushing, boiling, East River tide.

"Overboard!" yelled Sam. "Help! The lieutenant's overboard! Boat! Quick! I'll go after him! Lieutenant, try and catch an oar. I'm comin'! Men, hurry up, now, or he'll drown!"

Captain Vaile heard him and he himself dashed forward from the quarterdeck shouting vigorously:

"That's it, Green, give him an oar! Keep him up till the boat's lowered! He's been at Fraunce's!"

The cutter was already swamped, but there were other boats. In one of these, not upon the ship but out in the gloom a little distance, there were repeated sparkles making.

"There's his head," growled Sam, coming to the surface after his own first dip. "He's rising! He's up! I'll give him an oar!"

He had found one of those which had belonged to the cutter, and he threw it with all his might.

"All right!" he shouted to the men on the ship. "I've thrown him an oar. He's got it! I'll follow! Hurry down that boat! Strong tide!"

"It's an awful tide," exclaimed Captain Vaile, excitedly. "Can you hear me, Gregg? Keep him up, Green!"

The lieutenant made no reply. The confused, choking sensation with which he came to the surface had suddenly ceased when the butt of the oar struck him in the forehead. Then he went down, down and away with the tide.

"Sam's coming, Sassago," said Dick, as he clambored over into the Pequot's boat. "He has gotten even with Gregg, I guess."

"No 'calp 'em," muttered Sassago, regretfully, but they uttered no other sound, not even when they steadied the frail craft they were in to let Sam's weight add itself to their own.

"Dick," said Sam, "all right! But I ain't square with old Vaile yet."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DESERTERS.

THE *Sumter* lay at the Baltimore wharf and some of her crew were with her. Mate Devoort had been willing to take a vacation after the fatigues and perils of his second voyage to Africa. This trip had not taken the schooner to King Tom's Town, but it had been more profitable than the first. The net proceeds of the two human cargoes had been considerable. Nevertheless, Devoort prudently decided not to visit New York until after its evacuation by the British. After that longed-for event, he proposed to invest his well-earned gains in real estate in his own town and neighborhood.

Captain Wilton had placed his own capital with bankers, but he had been eager to see his wife and obtain tidings of Dick. The very fatigues of his northward journey, however, had brought on a return of the malady from which he had previously suffered. His tough constitution had held out until he reached the Montanye place, but he could endure no more.

He seemed to be likely to remain in bed for a while, but his chances for getting up again were

all the better because his wife was attending him. Neither Mrs. Wilton nor any other person in the house had been informed by Dr. Montanye of the daring plot for the rescue of Richard and Green.

"I begin to feel encouraged," thought Dr. Montanye, as he walked up and down his room that night. "If Sassago had found that he could do nothing, he would have returned before this time."

There were some reasons for encouragement, truly, but things were not looking altogether well, even after the two American deserters were in the old Pequot's boat. The swift tide was with them and all three were plying their paddles vigorously, but the musket-shots and the shouting had drawn the attention of the crews of other men-of-war boats already in the water while those of the *Ascalon* were lowering. These, indeed, gave their first attention to a vain search after Lieutenant Gregg. The patrol boats were firing signals and dashing hither and thither at a great rate. The alarm sped rapidly up the river and there was good reason for Sam's remark:

"We're in a tight fix, yet, Dick."

"I'll die before I'll be taken!" exclaimed Dick. Oh, for something to fight with!"

"Ugh!" grunted Sassago, lifting a parcel from

the bottom of the boat. "Boy fight hard. Kruger send 'em."

The bundle was heavy and on opening it disclosed not only cutlasses, but pistols and ammunition. Arms for three.

"'Calp 'em!" said Sassago. "Keep 'till. No 'peak. Lobster shoot 'em."

"It is shoot or hang," said Dick. "We may as well die now."

All their remaining chance for escape belonged to the darkness. The rain was beginning to fall increasing the gloom, and it was of nearly as much importance that the British boats carried lanterns as if to help the fugitives to avoid them.

"Boat ahoy!" rang out suddenly at no great distance. "What boat's that?"

"*Ascalon!*" shouted back Dick. "What boat's that?"

"*Majestic!*" responded a deep voice of authority. "Pull this way!"

"Can't," sent back Dick. "Deserters. Orders to follow."

Naval law required him to obey the latest command received from any superior officer, but this flat refusal staggered whomever was in charge of the other boat and he paused for a moment to consider. While his crew, therefore, rested on

their oars, the craft of which Sassago was captain shot swiftly away with the tide and the next hail sent after it was answered with a distant, mocking "Ha-ha !"

Furious indeed was the immediate pulling in pursuit, but the old Pequot knew the East River. They had long since passed the narrows which are now spanned by the suspension bridge and were sweeping across Kip's Bay. Beyond that, between what is known as Randall's Island and its brother island northward, there is a narrow channel. Both islands had been fortified and garrisoned, but the guns and men, all but a mere outpost guard, had recently been removed and Sassago knew it. Into that bubbling, rushing channel, he now suddenly steered his light wherry and it might as well have been swallowed up, since the pursuing boat, another and then another, swept on in the main stream.

"Lie low," said Dick. "I know this place. We'll be safe in a minute."

"Halt !" hailed them from the shore. "Halt or Ich vire !"

"Hess'n !" grunted Sassago. "Ugh! No hit. He all alone. No care."

The Hessian sentry was alone when he banged away into the rain and he was answered only by a pistol shot from the boat.

It did not hurt him, but it served its purpose for it drew to that point on the shore of the channel every soldier remaining on the island, or the brother island, as shot after shot increased the inexplicable alarm.

In a minute or so more the three fugitives were out in the millrace-like rush of the western channel, between those two islands and Manhattan.

Prior to this date the British army had slowly retired within its central works on the high ground half way down the island. There were still pickets and patrols maintained to the northward, as far as the Harlem river, but none on the Westchester mainland. As soon, therefore, as Sassago and his friends ran in through the Harlem Kills and beached their boat upon indisputable ground, they were safe.

"Ugh! Good!" remarked Sassago. "Boy no come to Montanye place right away. Wait for Wassin'ton men come."

Patriotic Mr. Kruger had gone into this rescue enterprise enthusiastically, remarking that Captain Richard Wilton would be just the man he wanted for one of his ex-privateers which was now entering the African trade. It was not a naval rig, nevertheless, which the old Pequot was now

unfolding, but two nearly new Continental uniforms, designed for large-sized soldiers and within an inch or so, here and there, of being good fits for Dick and Sam.

"Ugh!" said Sassago, as his friends hurriedly put them on. "Lobster no touch 'em now. Pequot go home. Montanye say boy 'pend money."

"Thank the doctor for me," said Dick.

"Ugh! No!" replied Sassago. "Miss Montanye. Old doctor forget. She tell 'em. She say boy want coat. Want 'pend money."

"Thank her, then," said Sam. "I'll tell my wife. Sally Green'll jest bless her."

Madeline had indeed been the first to think of it, but it was her father who had sent the ten sovereigns apiece to the two deserters. Mr. Kruger had cared for the other matters. It was the wit of a woman, and the work of a man, as usual.

"Boy go," said Sassago, "'Tay out town till all lubber sail away."

"I'll come in, then," responded Dick.

"I'm goin' to my wife," exclaimed Sam. "Thank Kruger. Thank 'em all for me."

Off went Sassago, saying something about fish for Bedford and Captain Vaile.

Great had been the excitement on the *Ascalon*

and a mustering of men had soon declared what names were missing.

"Bad news for Bedford!" said Captain Vaile. "Even if we catch these two witnesses we must hang them. Old Skipper Wilton'd be worth more than either of them, though. Awful about Gregg! Good officer. If the truth were known, I believe this is a bit of Yankee revenge!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MAJOR'S OFFER.

THERE were two messengers at the quarters of Major Bedford early the next morning. One was a middy from the *Ascalon*, with a note from Captain Vaile, announcing the escape of Wilton and Green and the drowning of Lieutenant Gregg.

"He ought to have locked 'em up!" exclaimed the major. "Poor Gregg! Those fellows! Now I must have old Wilton. What?"

That was an orderly who came to say:

"That old Indian, sir. With a lot of fish from Dr. Montanye."

"I want to see him," replied Bedford, curtly. "Bring him in."

The face of Sassago was more than usually good-humored and he received a very hearty greeting.

"Good old Pequot," he asserted of himself. "Fish all night for Bedford. How he feel? Pretty good?"

"First rate, Sassago," replied the major, giving him a silver coin. "Do you remember a man named Wilton?"

"Ugh!" grunted Sassago. "Go 'way, long time. Tay among Wassin'ton men. Lobster 'calp 'em."

"I know he went away," said Bedford. "He may come back again, and, if he does, I want to know. See that?"

He held up a gold coin and added:

"I'll give Sassago three of them when he tells me Captain Wilton is at home."

"Boy too?" asked Sassago. "How much for boy? Sassago sell 'em."

"The boy?" said the Major. "Why, we had him, and he got away last night. I'll give as much more for him, or for the man Green that deserted with him."

"Ugh! Good!" said Sassago. "Old Pequot sell Bedford big heap rebel. Bedford 'calp 'em all."

"Those are all I want," laughed the Major. "I won't buy any more."

Sassago grinned darkly and went out, while Major Bedford turned to his table and wrote to Captain Vaile an account of his very promising bargain. Thereby he fixed one point securely, for, upon reading that note, the captain could be sure that the old Pequot could have had nothing whatever to do with the escape of the two deserters.

Sassago had planned that very thing and he had also accomplished another, for his fortunate catch of fish appeared to the Major to come as an especial attention from Dr. Montanye.

"He must know that I have written to her," he chuckled, a coarsely sounding chuckle, away down in his throat. "I can keep him blinded to the very last. Then, my dear? The *Ascalon* for you—and England! My Lady Towton? Not quite!"

If such plans as he was at that moment gloating over involved a speedy call at the Montanye homestead, the old Indian was there before him. Dr. Montanye listened with deep interest to Sassago's account of the boating adventure of the previous night. No important feature of it was omitted and the doctor's face lengthened only a very little when he heard the fate of Gregg.

"I understand what they did," he muttered. "Revenge! The British authorities need not even hang them as deserters."

Sassago must have understood him, for he at once responded:

"Ugh! No 'calp 'em! Lubber drunk. Fall overboard. Green help 'em. Wilton boy in old Pequot boat. No come to house now. Lubber all sail away."

"That's it, of course," said the doctor. "Now how about the fish and Major Bedford?"

"Ugh! Bedford get fish. Eat 'em. Old Pequot sell 'em Cap'n Wilton. Sell 'em boy Wilton. Sell Green. Catch 'em all for Bedford. Get cash—"

He explained that matter further and the doctor listened with a sombre face.

"What can he want of them for any purpose of his own?" he pondered. "Perhaps Captain Wilton can explain. I will see Madeline first and then I'll have a talk with him. He seems to be feeling better this morning."

That meant that the strong old seaman was in one of the intervals of his intermittent African fever and could converse quite comfortably. He had already given his wife the history of his privateering and also, in part, of his later adventures. He had then taken a rest, but she had afterwards told so much of it to Madeline that she was better prepared than her father could have expected for a talk with him.

She listened eagerly while he gave her a spirited version of Sassago's river story.

"I'm so glad they got away!" she said, and she did not interrupt him while he went on to tell her of the Pequot's morning call upon Major Bedford and of the proferred bribes.

"What does that man want of old Captain Wilton?" he exclaimed as he ended his account.

"Why, father," she said, "the captain himself can tell you all about it. He and Dick captured that pirate. She is the schooner he sailed with to Africa. She wasn't Spanish, at all—she was British. He told Mrs. Wilton he found papers in her captain's chest. He was an Englishman and his real name was Algernon Bedford."

"The major's elder brother!" broke in the doctor.

"I suppose that's it," she said. "He was killed when his pirate ship was captured. They were all killed."

"I think some British authorities might take the ground that they were unlawfully murdered," said Dr. Montanye, once more as calm as usual. "Dick Wilton must not be caught by them. His father must not, by all means! He must go out into Westchester county as soon as he can be moved. The fact is, Madeline, the death of that pirate captain is likely to make Robert Bedford Baron Towton."

"I believe he is every inch as bad as his brother was," she murmured. "I am afraid of him. I don't want to see him again. What shall I do?"

"See him—and don't see him," said her

father. "I will see him myself. I must go and have a talk with Captain Wilton at once."

She looked after him admiringly, as he left the room. He seemed to her so strong and wise and brave. She believed he could do almost anything. At that moment, indeed, he seemed much more like a soldier than a clergyman. He was just the man to step out courageously in defense of his own. He was a father to be proud of and she knew, now, that he had served his country.

He was to miss the performance of one of his intentions, nevertheless. Madeline went down into the parlor for what she spoke of as "a long think." She had hardly drifted far into it, beginning with Dick Wilton and his boat race for life on the East river, before there were footsteps on the piazza. Nanny knew no reason why she should not at once admit Major Bedford and usher him into the room where her mistress was sitting—for all the world as if she were waiting for him.

"Madeline!"

It was with every appearance of lover-like gladness that he sprang forward. He even opened his arms as if he were about to clasp her in them and added: "My dear girl!"

She did not so much as put out a hand. Her

face was fiery red and then as angrily white, her lips tightening and her eyes sparkling.

"Stand back, sir!" she commanded him. "What do you mean!—Back! I will call my father!"

"O! My God!" he exclaimed. "Madeline, what does this come from? Dearest! What have I done to offend you? Why are my letters unanswered?"

"They should never have been written," she said. "Your trinkets will be returned to you. My father has them."

It was a destructively sudden reversal of what he had fondly supposed to be the situation, but he was a practiced strategist or tactician, and he rallied very well from his first defeat. He grew eloquent. He explained. He told her at last that he would soon become Lord Towton, as if that fact, of itself, ought surely to make her love him.

As he was speaking, she was all the while looking into his face unflinchingly, penetratingly. Even while listening to his fervid utterances she was unerringly reading his real nature, his real purpose, more and more clearly as he went on. The scorn she felt for him steadied her and helped her. She maintained an increasingly dignified

silence, somewhat nervously tapping the carpet with a foot now and then, as a kind of expression until the supposed temptation of his glittering title to come was presented. She did not actually speak, but the overstrain she was enduring voiced itself, for he heard, to his vast astonishment, what sounded like a low, quick laugh of derision, mixed with a whispered: "Lord Towton!"

His own thoughts flew like lightning—a volume of them in a second of time. He did not utter them, but they assisted him to an understanding of the situation, or at least to a new perception of its possible nature.

"The Wiltons and Montanyes are one family, it told him. Where is old Wilton? She knows! He has reported to them and she knows more than I do. Heavens! What is this? What does she know? I can see it in her face! I must go no further, this venture."

He drew back in genuine dismay, as the tide of poignant suggestions poured into his brain. She herself, did not, at this moment, imagine how much of a feeling of triumph mingled with the bitter contempt that was in the smile which was upon her lips. The Major made one more desperate effort to gather himself in good order for retreat.

"Madeline," he said, "you have misjudged me, terribly. I have offered you my life! Everything! I will go, now, but you will surely see me again."

"I hope not," she said, and he bowed himself out of the door.

In a moment more he was out of the house and in the saddle, his fierce disappointment striking his spurs deep.

"O!" exclaimed Madeline. "I am so glad he he is gone! I hate him!"

She had been standing haughtily erect when the Major passed out, and she now sat down not at all like a girl who was likely to faint away. She was much more like a very angry woman with much to think of. She was angry with herself, the next instant, for the strange feeling of reluctance, which she experienced, almost amounting to fear, at the thought of at once having to meet her father.

"What will he say or do?" she asked herself. "I do not understand him. O! What is there in him that I do not understand? I must see him. And he is up stairs with the captain."

Dr. Montanye was not then in Captain Wilton's room. Mrs. Wilton had met him at the door of it to tell him that her husband had talked

too much and must go to sleep. Madeline's father, therefore, had been in his own room, in front, and had heard the arriving hoofs of Major Bedford's horse. He had even seen the handsome, smartly-uniformed rider dismount and enter the house.

"I won't go down," he said. "I will let Madeline fight this battle herself. I believe I can trust her to fight it well. What then? It may be that my turn will come next. I am a clergyman. That's so. A man of peace. I wish I were with her! No! It is best as it is! I am ready for my duty!"

The something in his face which Madeline had never been able to understand was increasing momentarily while his thoughts went down to the parlor and to his daughter's interview with Robert Bedford. At this point he hardly looked like himself. He still wore the dress of a clergyman, but he stepped quickly across the room. The trunk sprang open and then on the table lay a silver hilted sword. Beside the sword lay a pair of pistols and by the table stood Dr. Montanye staring down at them.

"I think I could shoot as straight as ever," he said aloud. "I could handle a good blade, too. I am all I ever was, if it were not for this thing in my side and in my head."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CAPTAIN WILTON'S ESCAPE.

"MY DEAR old boy," said Captain Vaile, to his friend. "If you can't read that small riddle, I can."

They were sitting in the cabin of the *Ascalon*, and the captain had heard as much as Major Bedford chose to tell him of the Montanye defeat.

"What do you mean?" rasped the Major.

"Mean, my boy?" returned the captain. "Why, it's as clear as day. That girl knows more than we had any idea of. This is a revelation. Old Wilton has turned up and he has peached. He must be hidden near this, somewhere. Now! Mark me! She must have an idea that your brother Algernon is alive. No such girl would refuse an offer from a peer of England, but she might reject a younger brother with no estate to speak of."

The Major stifled a profane outburst with some apparent difficulty. Then he sat in gloomy silence while the captain continued his sagacious derivations.

"One refusal is no rebuff, my dear fellow. Don't be down-hearted and don't be in too much

of a hurry. You'll have her with you on the *Ascalon*, when we sail. That's all you want. Meantime, we must manage to catch old Wilton and get at the bottom of that matter. We must know whatever the Montanyes know. The doctor is an old fox. There's some wolf in him, too."

That might be, but Dr. Montanye was not looking at all wolfish just then. It had been long before he came down from his room, and when Madeline met him, he stood still and gazed very lovingly into her blushing face.

"I sent him away," she said.

"Don't say anything more," he replied, huskily, his left hand going suddenly to his side as if something hurt him. "I can trust you entirely my daughter."

"You are not sick?" she exclaimed. "Why, father, what is it? You are looking dreadful! Tell me what it is!"

"Nothing at all," he said. "I am not ill. It's only one of those old pains, in my side and in my head. I must see Captain Wilton as soon as I can. It looks to me as if he had very little time to lose. They'll be hunting for him."

He said it earnestly and a reply was uttered behind him, for Mrs. Wilton, just from her husband's room had heard him.

"Dr. Montanye!" she said. "I know they will. He must get away! I'll go with him. He had better die anywhere else than on board a British ship. We will go and find Richard."

"Dick?" said the doctor. "Sassago can find him for you any day. We will get the captain ready at once. Positively, there is no time to spare. We will hide his chest in the old cellar, under the lumber."

They had much more to say and long and deep was the slumber of Captain Wilton. It should have been a good sign for his recovery.

"He will need it," said Dr. Montanye, sitting by him, "but he must be awakened now. The wagon is ready. I have sent away Sassago on another errand, but he will follow the captain."

His voice had not been loud, but the captain had already been moving restlessly and the slight sound may have startled him. He tossed to and fro for a moment and then his eyes opened.

"Horrible!" he muttered. "I'll never do it again. They die too fast, white or black, in this business. What? Ah! Dr. Montanye. You are here? An old fellow will dream so sometimes."

A ghastly pallor shot across the clergyman's face, but it disappeared and he at once began to explain the situation. He did not have to give

more than a rough outline before the captain sat up in bed as if a sudden strength had come to him.

"Will I go?" he said. "I'd go if I were dying! The devils would hang me. But, upon my word, that schooner did fly the black flag. It's in my chest now, and so are all the papers of the captain."

"You can safely leave them there," said the doctor. "They can't find it."

"That's the thing to do," replied Captain Wilton. "I might be stopped and searched. My will is there, too. Everything goes to Mrs. Wilton and Dick. He knows my Antwerp bankers. They know him. I'm ready."

So far as his courage went, he was ready, but he was compelled to lie at full length on the mattress in the bottom of the wagon.

The British army lines were now so nearly open to American civilians to come and go that the doctor had no difficulty in obtaining permission for the passage of a wagon containing a sick man. It was only a little after midday when the doctor's black driver slowly walked his team over the bridge which spanned the Harlem at McComb's dam. Beside the driver sat Mrs. Wilton and behind them lay her husband in a dull stupor. The guards listlessly glanced at the pass which

was presented for inspection and the team drove on. Dr. Montanye had prudently reined in his horse at the New York end of the bridge.

"They are safe," he said, "but I don't think I am, quite yet. I hope Sassago will do his errand rightly. He is as cunning as a serpent. I can not be supposed to know any special reason for keeping Captain Wilton here. What awful things that man must have to remember! O, my God! What a dreadful thing it is to have a memory! Is a privateer's memory at all like that of a pirate? He spoke of the slave trade, too. I must think!"

He wheeled his horse and galloped swiftly homeward, while the wagon-team plodded steadily away toward the Westchester hills, where the captain would probably recover his health, more rapidly than in New York.

Somewhat earlier, Sassago had presented himself at the quarters of Major Bedford, but he did not come with fish. Only with a positively uttered assertion to the sentry:

"Old Pequot see Bedford! Quick! Bedford want 'em!"

"You can't see him!" gruffly responded the soldier. "Get out!"

"Lobster go tell 'em," said the Indian, grimly.

"Bedford 'calp 'em! Sassago 'peak 'em now! Lobster heap fool! Go! Say Sassago come!"

His accent and manner were even threatening and the sentry was getting angry, but other ears had heard and a loud voice shouted:

"Bring him in! I want him. What is it, Sassago?"

"Bedford no time lose," replied the Pequot, as soon as they were alone. "Pay Sassago for old Wilton."

"Where is he?" demanded the Major, pulling out his purse.

"Get horse right away," said Sassago. "Whip horse. Catch Wilton, quick!"

The promised sovereigns were in his outstretched hand, however, before he would answer another question. As soon as he had them he told the exact truth, a great deal of it. He reported Captain Wilton as just arrived, very sick and not at all intending to remain in New York. He might now be overtaken by a swift pursuit before he could cross the Harlem.

"Wilton no 'tay at Montanye place," explained Sassago. "Heap rebel. Old Montanye no let him 'tay in house. Put him out. No keep him."

That had a probable sound, and the major sprang away to hurry off a mounted messenger,

while Sassago loafed onward toward the counting room of Mr. Kruger. Bedford speedily followed his messenger. Both were well mounted and they rode hard, but the miles were many. When, in the early dusk of the evening, they reached the bridge, almost together, it was only to be informed that a wagon containing a woman and a sick man had gone over about two hours before.

"Was Dr. Montanye with them—the clergyman?" asked the major.

"No, sir," replied the sergeant of the guard at the bridge: "but I heard the woman speak of him."

"What did she say?" he exclaimed.

"Well, sir, it wasn't much. He'd been treating of 'em roughly, I suppose. She answered something the sick man said: 'What a terrible man Dr. Montanye is!'"

"I'm glad to know that," said the major. "So! They quarrelled, did they? This is a dreadful piece of business."

He was too late to make a capture of his proposed witness, however, and he rode away in bitter disappointment.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A NIGHT AFFAIR.

IT WAS like Dr. Montanye to avoid saying anything more to his daughter about her interview with Major Bedford. What might have been impossible to another man was strictly in keeping with the iron reserve of his accustomed way.

He was not called upon by the authorities for any report concerning Captain Wilton. The two British officers who were really at all interested were satisfied with what they supposed themselves to know.

The Montanye homestead was at some distance from its nearest neighbors. Broad fields and bits of woodland gave it almost a lonely character. At no great distance beyond the road, easterly, was a small boat landing, at the head of a creek which grew broader and deeper as it went into the East River, so far away. Sassago regarded it as his own creek and landing and a boat kept here was his, whatever might be Dr. Montanye's ideas of its ownership.

There was at once a different sort of loneliness within the house after Mrs. Wilton went away.

She left many of her things behind her, of course, but they were all carefully packed up. Her husband's big seachest had at once been taken down cellar and stowed in a dark corner under the oldest part of the house. There it lay, now, with a heap of rubbish over it.

An inexpressible sense of loneliness came upon Madeline herself. Her only woman friend, altogether like a near kinswoman, had been taken away from her. Her father seemed, for some reason, to be further away than formerly. He had indeed grown moody and silent, and he passed more of his time in his own room. There was help to be had from books and Madeline took refuge among them. They made her think, too, and dream as she read—some of them. The pleasant autumnal days went by, one by one, and the pleasantest thing about them, to the people in New York, was that each in succession measured the nearer approach of a great and welcome change. Yet a little later and they were to be no longer the residents of a British garrison town. They were to become free Americans, with a city all their own, with a country to be proud of and with a new, wonderful future opening before them.

There was to be one grand going of the

British fleet and army, but, prior to that large fractions of the forces were sent off, piecemeal, as they could be prepared for shipment. Transports were all the while arriving and guns, military stores and troops were going on board of them. Major Bedford himself was a busy man during those days and he even skirmished, diplomatically, to obtain special duties which might detain him and his particular detachment.

More than one carefully worded missive, expressing undiminished passion, came to Madeline Montanye. Beautiful bouquets of flowers were deftly left at the house. She was wise enough to put away the letters, but Nanny did as she pleased with the flowers. Again and again did an epauleted horseman canter by, up or down the road, to wave a useless hand toward the house, if Madeline were flitting away from a window, or if there had been a vanishing flutter of drapery upon the piazza. It was all in vain except that it gave Sassago an opportunity for saying to Nanny in the kitchen :

"Bedford come watch for Nanny. T'row heap kiss to her. Come take her away, pretty quick. Put her on ship. Nanny go to England. Lubber carry off in dark. Old Pequot 'calp her good, so she no go."

He tried hard to impress her with her peril from some kind of 'press gang, but she believed she was safe in the kitchen. A different errand was preparing, however, for a squad of men, a boat's crew of what Sassago called "lubbers." A day came when Captain Vaile said to his friend :

"Well, my boy, your command are all on board. I have my sailing orders, too. The *Ascalon's* anchor must come up at the turn of the tide, to-morrow morning. We must get over the bar at Sandy Hook as fast as the wind will take us. Are you sure you can make your point?"

"I am," said the major, emphatically. "Sassago has kept me well informed of all that's going on. I don't think I will let him know I am coming to-night, though."

"It's to be a surprise, eh?" laughed the captain. "Heave ahead, then. Don't get into any scrape. Make it all after dark."

If Major Bedford considered himself well informed, so did Sassago's other friend, Dr. Montanye, but it had not been deemed well to alarm Madeline. All that could possibly be needed was a sharp lookout, and it would yet be many days before an hour of actual peril—the day of the sailing of the fleet.

At the supper table that very evening, Dr.

Montanye talked more than usual, for there was a capital epistle from Mrs. Wilton to be discussed. The captain, she wrote, was much better. He would soon be on his feet again. Richard was with them and he was wild to come to the city. His friend, Sam Green, had been heard from and he meant to bring his wife and children to New York, for he had funds enough to join in an enterprise with Dick and Captain Wilton.

"I wish I could go and see Mrs. Wilton," said Madeline. "We shall have them here again soon, at all events."

Her spirits rose at the idea and prospect of having her house full once more.

Dr. Montanye went to his books, up stairs. Evening came, but the sun was hardly below the horizon when a boat with several men in it pulled away from the *Ascalon*. A boatswain and six sailors were a sufficient crew, and in the stern seats sat a gentleman in civilian's dress who also wore the unmistakable air of an army officer. Just before leaving the ship he turned and said to Captain Vaile:

"Thank you, old fellow. I haven't the slightest fear of failure."

"Remember, major," replied the captain, "orders are orders. The *Ascalon* must sail

whether you are on board or not. If anything happens, give your own account of it and take the next ship. There may be accidents, you know."

"Never you fear," said Bedford, confidentially. "I'll be on time."

He was in the boat, now, holding the tiller ropes, and he said no more except that as the men pulled along he fumbled at something in his breast pocket, muttering;

"There! I ought to have put that away. I declare! The doctor sent them back, but I'll make her take them this time. I haven't often seen a prettier turquoise set."

All in the boat were armed, of course, the sailors with cutlasses and the major with the ordinary dress sword of a gentleman, for they might be rowing into some kind of danger. They were in no hurry, but it was after all, a pretty long pull against a tide, to the mouth of the creek on the Manhattan shore which was their first destination.

Not long before the major steered into it, a much smaller craft had preceded the *Ascalon's* jolly boat. It contained only two men and neither of them appeared to be armed, for they were neither soldiers nor man-o'-war's men. No slave,

red or black, was allowed to carry weapons, nor was any white American within the army lines.

There was neither guard nor patrol to be looked out for, and these two men paddled on, but they were not seeking any regular landing. Somewhat westward of what is now the line of Madison Avenue, they pushed their punt in among a dense growth of rushes and left it, hurrying up the bank to disappear among rocks and trees.

"Bedford no come to-night, mebbe," said one of them. "Come some time! Old Pequot want 'em come! 'Calp 'em!"

"I wish Sam Green were here and some of my men," replied his companion, hotly. "I want a cutlass!"

"Ugh!" grunted Sassago, halting in front of a tangled copse of briars and under brush. "Sassago 'teal 'em. Wilton boy cut lubber. Cut Bedford. Ugh!"

He had been a very thoughtful Indian, for out of that queer armory he pulled a roll of old canvas and out of the canvas came a pair of excellent "hangers," cut and thrust, belts and all.

"No put 'em on now," he said. Cover up. Boy come to house."

Once more they pushed on, hidden by the darkness, and now the *Ascalon's* boat was gliding

up the creek. When this grew too narrow for oars, "poling" would answer, for the tide was still in, until a halt was made at the landing at the head of the inlet, not far from the Montanye place. All the major's plans were apparently working well. He left four sailors at the boat and walked forward attended by the two others and the boatswain. Even these were shortly left behind, posted among the tree shadows eastward of the road, while he himself went cautiously on to reconnoitre. He was very much favored by circumstances, that beautiful starlit, but moonless night, as if it were made for him.

"There she is, now!" he whispered, eagerly. "Out on the piazza. My opportunity has come! One bold push and she's mine!"

Madeline had been tempted out. It was so warm in the house; so much cooler in the open air; such a lovely evening. She had received no intimation of possible danger. She stood still and admired the stars. She walked up and down. Then she sat down in a wicker-work chair, large enough to lean back in and think of Mrs. Wilton's letter and the days that were to be.

"Richard is coming, too," she thought. "I have real curiosity to see him. I want to know what he is. How dreadfully he must have

suffered on that horrid *Ascalon!* He got away splendidly! He's a brave fellow!"

At that moment a man, not in uniform, came rapidly striding toward the house, from the gateway. He sprang up the steps and stood between her and the door, but she was not at once alarmed Not until he then stepped quickly nearer.

"Madeline! My darling!" he said, in a low intense voice. "I have come for you!"

"Major Bedford?" she screamed. You here? You villain! Father! Help!"

"You are too late!" he said fiercely. "There is no time for nonsense. Come with me! Madeline, I love you! You shall come! You are going with me to England! I am taking you to the *Ascalon!*"

Even as he threw an arm around her he put to his lips a boatswain's whistle and blew a shrill call that was answered from beyond the road.

It was also answered, but not by any sound in Dr. Montanye's room. Hatless, coatless, the old clergyman dashed out and down the stairs, his sword drawn in his hand, but his pistols left behind in his mad haste. There was not another soul in the house for even Nanny was at a far-away neighbor's.

Major Bedford was a strong man, well able

to carry such a weight as Madeline's, and he cared not at all for her frantic exclamations of scorn and hate. She would get over all that—on the *Ascalon.*

"Father!" she gasped. "They will kill him!"

For the brave doctor was crossing blades with the boatswain and it was remarkable how good a swordsman a clergyman might be. The two sailors also had their cutlasses out and were trying to disarm him, but, at that moment there was another arrival from beyond the road.

Madeline was struggling in vain with frenzied but futile desperation. The Major held her easily, but he was glancing warily around him, for her father's coming had unlooked for danger in it. He suddenly let go of her with his right hand that he might jerk out his sword. In an instant more he let go of her with his left hand also, that he might guard his life from the swift passes of Richard Wilton. The two British sailors darted back to help him and, as they did so, the boatswain rolled over with a shrewd sword slash in his forehead.

"Madeline! The house!" shouted her father. "Run!"

"O, father!" she screamed. "Come!—You run too! O! God help us!"

"Not till I've killed him!" went back to her in a hoarse, hollow voice.

Dr. Montanye was not to cross swords with Robert Bedford. One of the sailors was for a moment in his way. As for Dick, he had only the other seaman to contend with now, and yet he had not drawn a drop of blood from Bedford.

"Cut him down!" the major shouted. "We must make short work, now!"

A dark form glided swiftly behind him as he spoke. He gave one convulsive spring forward and fell at full length on the grass.

"Ugh!" growled a low voice that passed by. "Bedford flog old Pequot."

"Bos'n!" sang out Dick Wilton, as if he had been in command. "Men, take him to the boat! Quick! Or I'll cut you down!"

They were outnumbered and they were already beaten, although the boatswain had staggered to his feet. He was not so badly hurt after all that he could not help them lift the major.

"Dead as a herring!" said one of them.

"On board with him," said the boatswain. "It's a bad night's work."

"No 'peak," said Sassago to Dr. Montanye. "Lubber not know old Pequot. Not know Wilton boy."

"O, father! Are you hurt?" gasped Madeline.

"Not a scratch," he said. "Thank God, my dear! He sent Richard and Sassago. We owe them everything! God bless them!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A DARK STOREHOUSE.

THE peril which had come to Madeline had disappeared, but she was still dazed by the sudden terror of its coming and its going. What she said or did not say she could not afterwards have recalled. She succeeded in thanking Richard, calling him Dick, but she was at first frantically absorbed in her search for any possible harm to her father. The doctor had recovered his self-possession wonderfully when the fight was over, but there was a good deal of strength left in the arm he kept around her.

"Richard Wilton," he said. "I do thank God that you came as you did. I won't try to say how I thank you. Leave that to some other time, my dear boy, for you haven't a minute to spare. There will be an inquiry. You must get away."

Dick was well aware of that and Sassago was waiting for him. Meantime he was an Indian and his eyes were not like those of common white men. He had seen something fall upon the grass when Major Bedford's coat was hastily torn open by one of the sailors for a look at his hurt. Sassago had hunted in the grass and he now handed

something to Dick. It was the morocco case which the major had so unintentionally brought with him. A kind of evil fate followed that set of blue minerals from hand to hand, on land and sea.

Sassago did not look at all like himself as he and Richard hurried away together, since he was decked, or disguised for the occasion in the very man-o'-warsman's rig which Sam Green had taken off after escaping from the *Ascalon*. He was very uncomfortable in it and he proposed a speedy return to his accustomed buckskins. He had not even drawn his "hanger" in the fight, and his long, sharp "'calp" knife had answered quite as well.

Their boat was reached at its hiding place among the rushes. Just before he got there Dick put his fingers to his lips and blew a peculiarly shrill and piercing whistle. It was a call, a signal, well-known to all the sailors of the old *Montauk*.

"Ugh!" said Sassago, nodding intelligently. "Men come. Lubber no catch 'em. Good!"

In a moment more no less than three came out of the shadows and silently stepped into the punt with Dick. It was the second signal they had heard that night, and Major Bedford would have had no reinforcement from the crew of the *Ascalon's* boat, if he had sent for it.

Through the darkness which brooded over the creek itself and then up the starlit waters of the East river, so many impressed American seamen were pulling for life and liberty.

The Montanye house was shut up. It no longer needed guarding within or without. There were lights in two of the upper rooms, but the curtains of the windows of both were drawn.

Out in the kitchen sat Nanny by a table upon which her black head rested. She was sound asleep, with the cleaver, the great carving knife and a broad-axe just beyond her hand.

Hardly any opiate could have put Madeline to sleep, during her first hour in her room, but a new sense of safety came to her as she realized how terribly complete had been her deliverance. With it, there came, at last, a restful, hopeful feeling and she closed her eyes.

In Dr. Montanye's room his lamp was burning. He had not made any preparations for repose. He had not even sheathed his sword, and one of the pistols on the table was cocked and ready for use.

"No. I couldn't lie down," he said as he sat in his chair at the table and fingered the sword-hilt. "How I wanted to kill that man! I am thirsty for it, now. What a wonderful thing

that thirsting to slay is when it comes upon a man! I have sometimes believed it to be inherited from our heathen ancestors—vikings, berserkers, free-booters, soldiers. I must try and overcome this other thing. It is getting too strong for me, of late. I wonder if I seem entirely sane to others? Can I trust myself as to my conduct? I am positive that I am sane, entirely so, as to ordinary life, but I go mad whenever I enter that chamber of my memory. I must make every effort to keep out of it. I am in it to-night. It is all around me, after this fighting. I go away back among the fights of that hell time. I can hear them scream. I can see them walk the plank. O! How they did beg for life, sometimes! My God! My God! I can see them kneel and beg with the steel at their throats! I do believe I am mad! I shall be —I shall go raving, unless I can get this thing under. And yet it was so long ago—so long ago—and I could not help myself. It was not my own will. Can God forgive? Man can not —can not!"

The night waned and at low tide the anchor of the *Ascalon* began to come up, for she was to reach the bar at Sandy Hook, if she could, at the next high water, and her sailing orders were peremptory.

A boat came to her, propelled by three weary oarsmen. Another man with a bloody, bandaged head held the tiller ropes and yet another seemed to be lying asleep at the bow. It was one who was forever asleep so far as this world was concerned, and so it was reported to the officer of the deck. Very quickly, then, the body of Major Bedford was lifted on board and Captain Vaile himself had come to receive an account of the evening's tragedy.

"No, sir," the boatswain said, in reply to a question, "the old man gave me this cut on the head—small blame to him, I say—but he didn't come near the major. I think it was one of the 'pressed men that cut him. They all got away. I knew the man, though, that was fighting the major when the other fellow was cut."

"Who was he?" asked Captain Vaile.

"Dick Wilton, sir, and the man that was first there with him, I don't know. A dark fellow he was and ship-rigged. The lady wasn't hurt, nor the old man."

"I am very glad of that," said the captain, chivalrously. "Poor Bedford! His wooing went wrong. We must heave to and send his corpse ashore for burial. You and the men will have to go and make your affidavits. I think nobody will give Dr. Montanye any trouble about it."

"Not a particle, sir," emphatically remarked an officer standing by him. "He's a brave old fellow, clergyman or no clergyman. What they will try to do will be to hush it up. As likely as not we shall hear that Bedford was killed in a duel."

"That would do, perhaps," said the captain. "It's an ugly piece of business, anyhow. Sir Guy would go wild if such an affair were publicly forced upon him, for Washington to make something out of just now. There is trouble enough, and disgrace, too. 'Pon my soul! I'm glad that girl is not to be on board the *Ascalon*. Keep this to yourself, if you will: Young Jack Mackenzie, out yonder, is Baron Towton, by this night's murderous work and he doesn't dream of it yet."

So went the talk on the *Ascalon* and all the while Dick Wilton and his fellow deserters were pulling hard to reach the Westchester shore. Sassago was not plying his paddle at all. He was saving his strength, if that were necessary, for a prudent job of fishing to be undertaken as soon as he could once more change himself from a British sailor into an American Pequot, entirely ignorant of anything more murderous than the taking of flounders.

CHAPTER XL.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

CAPTAIN VAILE had reasoned sagaciously as to the view which Sir Guy Carleton would take of the Bedford affair. That much-worried Commander-in-Chief decided at once that there should be no needless publicity given to an attempted outrage which would surely arouse so much indignation, not only in America but in England. Nevertheless, his steward received private instructions and, when, the next morning, Sassago arrived with a fine lot of fish, he was at once taken before Sir Guy.

With much apparent difficulty the old Pequot was at last made to comprehend what had happened. After that he answered very freely a number of questions which were asked him concerning not only Major Bedford but the several members of the Montanye household.

"Bedford no eat fish any more," he said thoughtfully. "Lubber from ship 'calp 'em. Sassago tell old Montanye. Guy 'calp lubber."

"Do you know a man named Wilton?" sternly demanded a staff officer. "Has he been seen at the Montanye place?"

"Ugh!" said Sassago. "Old Wilton rebel! Go to Africa. Catch nigger. Come home sick. Most dead. No 'tay at Montanye place. Go away quick."

"I don't mean the old man," said the officer. "I mean his son Richard. He is a deserter from the *Ascalon*."

"Ugh! Boy got away?" inquired the Pequot, stolidly. "Lubber let 'em go? No come back. Sassago ask Montanye, where boy—Fish all night. Say go home now. 'Teward got fish."

That was so and after a little more fruitless pumping they gave him up. They did not, however, hear him mutter to himself, as he went away:

"Lobster flog Sassago. Bedford tell 'em flog hard. All kill, now. Wassin'ton men come. Flog nigger, no flog Pequot. Nigger all slabe. Buy 'em, sell 'em. Sassago no want nigger, anyhow. Ugh! Go tell Nanny old Guy come take her."

It was plain that his hatred of slavery did not include any wildly philanthropic ideas concerning the human rights of black men or women.

Up at the Montanye place the new day seemed to begin in a dead calm. It was a surprise both to Madeline and her father that it should be so,

but it continued very much the same during days that followed. They knew of Sassago's examination and that a strict inquiry was carefully made into all the circumstances attending the death of Major Bedford, but that was all. Neither of them was asked for public testimony. Even the doctor himself was called upon for no more than a wisely prepared affidavit before Sir Guy's chief of staff. It was entirely satisfactory, it appeared, that while he had seen Bedford fall, he could not tell by whose hand he had fallen.

Madeline actually did know and was quite willing not to say so even when Sassago calmly assured her:

"Old Pequot no 'calp Bedford. He tumble down. Lubber take 'em away. Heap dead, now. Nebber flog old Pequot, any more. No eat fish. Old Guy go home, pretty soon. All lobster sail away. Wilton boy come see Miss Madeline. Sassago like 'em."

She could not have explained now why she was in no hurry to see Richard Wilton. She almost hoped, indeed, that he might speedily obtain a good ship and go to sea again.

Richard was pondering that very matter in the quiet Westchester farmhouse, where he and his father and mother, day after day, discussed

their hopes and plans for the future. Captain Wilton and his wife had long since heard all the particulars of Dick's severe experience on the *Ascalon*. He on the other hand had received minute accounts of his father's two voyages to the coast of Africa. He had, however, received somewhat different impressions from those that had been intended. In another direction of the currents of talk, Dick had seemed never to tire of listening to his mother's history of her life at the Montanye homestead. She filled his mind with pictures and many of them which were exceedingly pleasant to look upon, had a very beautiful central figure which, to his perception, would bear much ornamentation—with turquoises and diamonds, for instance.

Captain Mark Wilton was no longer a very sick man, but he was not by any means well and his wife was worried about him. She watched his movements and studied his face, but not with half the anxiety with which Madeline was watching the face of Dr. Montanye.

"What can be the matter with him?" his daughter asked herself, again and again. "There is a change of some kind. I can't tell what it is. I think he will be another man when the British are all gone. I wish they'd hurry away."

Dr. Montanye said that very thing himself; and at last the day came for the final evacuation of New York.

He obtained a carriage, that morning, November 25th, 1783. Madeline did not know, until afterwards, that he had purchased it, horses and all, from a Tory friend who was to go to England on a British transport. The day before he had had a tall young spruce tree stem set up in the yard before the house, fitted well with tackle and pulley.

When Madeline came out, the morning of the great event, and was about to enter the carriage, several men, black and white, were bothering around the foot of that trim staff with what looked like rope and bunting. A horseman rode in at the gateway and, as he drew his rein beside them, she heard him say:

"What lubbers! They don't know how!"

He did, evidently, for he sprang to the ground and took the task upon his own hands. She hardly had time to say:

"Dear me! It's Dick Wilton!"—before the halliards worked freely and the broad, beautiful flag of the young Republic, the Stars and Stripes of the United States, shot gaily up to flutter in the wind—the first American banner lifted upon

Manhattan Island after the peace with England.

Madeline tried to join in the cheering, but the words died on her lips, for her eyes were upon her father's face and she had never before seen him look as he did then.

"Up with it, Dick!" he shouted. "I don't care, now, whether I live or die! Up! Up! Freedom forever! Thank God!"

Dick and the rest hurrahed, vigorously, all but old Sassago.

"Heap flag!" he said. "Lobster no come any more. No pull 'em down. Lubber go, 'tay away. No 'calp 'em! Ugh!"

He had, therefore, some cause for sober-minded regret and was not altogether satisfied with Evacuation Day.

Dick was quickly in the saddle again and Dr. Montanye shouted to his coachman:

"Drive on! I want to be there to see George Washington ride in. Hark! Hear the cannon, up the road! He is coming! The Continentals are marching in! Hurrah!"

Thousands of hearts were beating wildly that November day. Madeline found that her own was in almost too painful sympathy with her father's feverish, half frantic enthusiasm. It was a genuine help to her, now and then, to turn and

look at the bronzed, handsome, war-like face of Richard Wilton as he rode beside the carriage, swinging his hat from time to time on the slightest provocation. The carriage itself was flagged and decked right patriotically and the soldiers it passed cheered its occupants as Madeline leaned out to wave her handkerchief to them. She did not know, at first, that she was weeping with excitement and so she hardly understood what was meant when a whole regiment—what was left of it—stood still and saluted her and cheered when its ragged colonel shouted:

"God bless her! Men, Halt! Present arms! —The girl's a cryin'!"

"O, father!" she exclaimed. "I want to give them everything we have!"

"That's precisely what I'm going to do," he responded, but she did not quite understand him then, for he added:

"If I can live to do it."

The Continentals were indeed a ragged array, half-fed, half-clad, but they were splendid soldiers in their drill and bearing. These were the war-worn veterans to whom the nation owed its life, but for whom it did not provide, even in the hour of triumph which their unselfish valor had won and which their sufferings and blood had so dearly paid for.

So Dr. Montanye said to his daughter, as the heavy, old fashioned barouche rolled steadily down Broadway.

The British flag had already disappeared and the Stars and Stripes were floating from forts and shipping. A beautiful banner hung over the entrance of Fraunce's tavern, where General Washington, for a short time after his arrival, held a very informal public reception, preparatory to the further ceremonials intended by the patriotic citizens of New York.

Dr. Montanye and Madeline left their carriage and entered the tavern, closely followed by Richard Wilton and by one more important member of the Montanye household.

Madeline walked on as if she were in a dream, for she was led into the great dining-room, the ball-room, where she had danced with Major Bedford and his fellow-officers of the British army and navy. She could not help a swift recalling of that evening, when the room had glittered with brilliant uniforms instead of these tarnished tatters of buff and blue. A number of them were gathered around the Commander-in-Chief, at the upper end, near a table.

"Come!" whispered her father. "I must speak to him, for your sake and for my own.

This may be my last opportunity to set things right. The truth must come out, now—My darling!"

Already she had been compelled to half notice glances of surprise, almost of indignation, from one and another of the more prominent patriot men and women who were present. She had even heard one angry voice asking:

"What is that old Tory preacher doing here? He ought to be hung!"

"He is speaking of father!" flashed through her excited brain; but, before another thought could come, they were standing before Washington himself.

Madeline was trembling from head to foot, at that moment, for more than one exclamation of suppressed surprise was uttered among the throng behind them as the General stepped forward, holding out a hand, first to the clergyman and then to his daughter.

"I am very glad to see you, Dr. Montanye," he said, "and you, too, Miss Montanye."

She felt that her father's whole frame was quivering as he grasped the general's hand and bowed low, as if to press his lips to it, while Washington turned and said loudly to the officers gathered near him:

"Gentlemen, not one of us has served his country more faithfully or at greater risk. But for information sent to me by Dr. Montanye, I could not have decided to march for Yorktown!"

Something like astonished acclamations answered him from all over the room, and among them could be heard very distinctly:

"Ugh! Good! Old Wassin'ton beat lobster. Beat lubber. No 'calp 'em!"

"Sassago!" exclaimed the General. "Are you here? Shake hands with me. You will not have to go through the British army lines any more."

"Ugh!" said Sassago. "No more want old Howe permit paper to go fish. Whoop! Old Pequot see Gen'al Wassin'ton! He satisfy! Wassin'ton own him! Old Wassin'ton Sassago master!"

Even his Indian firmness broke down, or up, in his intense delight and pride over such a recognition.

It was enough, all around, and others were pressing forward to congratulate the doctor and Madeline.

"Come, my daughter," he said. "My name is forever clear, now. Come!"

They escaped the more easily because the General had so many more hands to shake.

Hardly were they in the open air before she heard the Pequot muttering:

"Ugh! Sassago want 'calp heap lobster! Want fight! All get away!"

He disappeared among the throng, but Richard Wilton on horseback accompanied the Montanye carriage all the way home.

Very little was said by either of its occupants on the road, and the doctor lay back as if he were exhausted.

"This excitement has been too much for him," thought Madeline, as they drove through the gateway. Then, as she looked toward the piazza, her own enthusiasm returned upon her for a moment, and she called out:

"Oh, Mrs. Wilton! I'm so glad you're here! Our army has come! Father and I have seen Washington! Spoken to him!"

"Oh, come in!" said Mrs. Wilton.

"Madeline," said her father, "I am very glad she is here. Tell her all about it. Let me go to my room right away. I will see the captain bye and bye."

"Father, are you feeling badly?"

"I must rest, dear. Let me go."

It would have been cruel, useless, to detain him, and he was told by Mrs. Wilton that her

husband would not be out of bed to see anybody for some time. She and Madeline began a hurried discussion of the events of the day, but Richard threw the rein of his horse to a servant and darted up stairs. Captain Wilton was not asleep when his son came in and he even spoke cheerily.

"Had a grand time, Dick?" he asked. "I'm all right. I knew the trip here would be a little too much for me. Glad to get here. I must lie still, though."

"That's the thing," said Dick. "A good resting spell'll fetch you 'round."

"Well, maybe so," said his father, a little seriously. "At all events I want to repeat one thing more, just now. It's that chest in the cellar. Don't have it fetched up yet. Don't take anything out of it. I want to go through it myself. I haven't half read that pirate Araga's logbook, nor the other things. You must read 'em with me. I tell you what, Dick, there's a great deal in that oldest Spanish logbook and in the charts that are tied up with it. And now I want you to mind one thing, whether I live or die. You are never to sail to Africa! I have made up my mind to that. You don't need any such money. Your mother won't have it. But there's another kind of voyage for somebody to make, or I am

mistaken. Wait till you and I can map it out. Let the chest lie there. Now tell me about Washington and the army."

"I will," said Dick. "Hang the chest! You must rest and get well."

The old man could shut his eyes and listen, full of intense gratification over what his son had to tell concerning Washington and the army, but Madeline's anxiety concerning her father was increasing, every minute, and before long she broke away from Mrs. Wilton and hurried up stairs.

"I had better look into his room," she thought. "He might not be able to call for help if he wanted it."

Dr. Montanye was not by any means helpless, for he was standing erect at the table. Upon this he had spread out something which he may have taken from the open trunk in the corner. When Madeline half timidly opened the door and stepped in he was gazing down upon this thing with eyes which seemed to be starting from their sockets with uncontrollable terror. He laid a hand upon it, and then he uttered a low, long, agonized cry, many times more painful than the one Madeline had thought she heard him utter when he crossed swords with Bedford.

She could not scream. She had not strength

left to utter his name, for the thing which covered the table was a wide and somewhat tattered flag. It was as black as ink and it was blazoned with a large white skull and bones—the horror of the whole earth.

He had heard her enter, for he turned and looked her in the face and gasped:

"My mad day, Madeline. Tell me, can a man be a buccaneer seven years and not be mad forever afterwards?"

Then he fell heavily upon the floor, and Madeline knelt beside him.

CHAPTER XLI.

MADELINE'S GOLD.

"I WILL never be a slaver!" was the low-voiced exclamation of Richard Wilton as he left his father's room. "I've been a slave myself, on board the *Ascalon*. What?"

He had reached the open door of Dr. Montanye's room and had involuntarily glanced within. For one breathing space he stood still, in a sudden surprise. The next instant, as Madeline knelt by her father and strove to arouse him, she saw Dick stoop at her side. He raised the unconscious form in his powerful arms and bore it to the bed.

"Madeline," he said, "the nearest physician. Send! Instantly!"

Without a word of reply she darted from the room and down stairs. A servant was sent in all haste and when she returned she found Mrs. Wilton standing by Richard at the bedside.

"Has he come to?" she whispered, wild with fright and grief. "Has he spoken?"

"Madeline," murmured Mrs. Wilton. "Dear! I'm afraid he will never speak again. O, my son! What is it?"

"He is really gone, mother. His pulse does not beat. There is no breathing."

"Quick! Richard! Madeline!"

It was no wonder that Madeline was fainting, but Dick caught her as she was falling, and he and his mother placed her in a great rocking-chair, at a window. When she opened her eyes again, a minute or so later, Mrs. Wilton was bathing her head. Madeline's first perception, however, was of a bright fire blazing in the fire place. There had been a heap of papers and rubbish, ready for kindling, and upon these Dick had quickly thrown the black flag which had been upon the table. Even his mother had not noticed what he was burning, so intently was she looking down into the still face of Dr. Montanye. All the more did a strong sense of gratitude mingle itself with Madeline's recovery of consciousness. With a great effort she tottered to her feet and went over to look at her father. He lay very quietly, as if asleep, and Dick had already crossed the powerless hands upon his breast.

"What could it be? What did he mean?" murmured Madeline.

"It was this attack," said Dick, and then she knew, without telling her, that as he came along the passage, he had heard her father's last frenzied utterance before he fell.

She did not faint again, but all the world seemed to have turned black—as black as the flag which Dick had burned.

The room was utterly silent during minutes that followed, except for the sobs of Mrs. Wilton with her arms around her young friend, for Madeline did not weep.

The messenger had been fortunate in meeting the family physician and he arrived sooner than had been expected. He entered the room with professionally noiseless footsteps and he bent above his old friend and neighbor, for a moment.

"I heard him speak, once, of an old wound," suggested Mrs. Wilton.

"I know about that, madame," replied the physician. "It was a pike thrust that he received in the old French war, when he was a young man. This is not from any old hurt:—this is heart failure. The lamp went out. I heard what was said to him by General Washington, to-day, and I noted his face, then. Our friend has endured too long and hard a strain during our struggle for freedom. I am glad that he endured to the end."

"So am I," said Dick. "I am glad he lived to see the British leave New York."

"Now, Mrs. Wilton," said the physician,

turning to Madeline. "This girl must go to her room, or I shall have another case on my hands. I'll go down for my saddle-bags. Give her a glass of wine at once. Take her away from this—"

"I will go," said Madeline. "Richard, I must see you for a moment."

He stepped out into the hall with her, and the instant they were alone, he said:

"I burnt it. He was delirious. Don't say a word about it."

He was blunt, he was even authoritative, for he was accustomed to command, and it was like medicine to Madeline.

"Thank you! That's all," she said. "But I want you to take charge of everything in that room. Lock up—"

"I wish father were well," he said, as bluntly as before. "As it is, I must take charge of everything in the house. Mother will take care of you and you needn't worry about anything else. Your father was a good, brave man. I honored him when he was alive and I honor him now. Can't you see that he had suffered awfully?"

"Honor him?" she said. "I do honor him! Nobody knows but you—"

He interrupted her, sharply.

"I don't know a thing!" he said. "You don't know anything, either!" Then his voice changed, somehow, and it was altogether softer, when he added: "Now, Madeline, do just as Dr. Fennimore says, and mother. You will be down sick if you don't."

She turned silently away, while another footstep, as noiseless as Dr. Fennimore's own, glided past them into the chamber of death, and the old Pequot slave stood at the foot of the bed.

"Montanye gone," he muttered. "Sassago watch he face long time. Ugh! Know he go pretty quick. Feel heap bad."

He saw that Dr. Fennimore was about to go, however, and he at once brought a chair to the bedside.

"Go," he said. "Old Pequot 'tay. No leave Montanye. 'Tay right here."

"Just the thing," said the physician, and he hurried down stairs to find the right opiate for Madeline.

"Sassago there?" remarked Dick, looking in at the door. "That's right. Now I can go and attend to things around the house. I believe he trusted that old Indian more than he did anybody else."

There by the dead patriot, for such he had

been, sat his nearest friend, his personal property also until that hour. One was almost as motionless as the other until the undertaker came, long afterwards, to remove the remains to one of the rooms down stairs. Then Sassago slowly arose and followed, but he did not linger in the house nor did any of its inmates see him again that evening.

Madeline did not again make her appearance, for both Dr. Fennimore and Mrs. Wilton forbade it and there had been nothing left for her to do. Her father's room was vacant, therefore, of any other occupant, when Richard Wilton entered it and locked its door behind him. It was very late when he did so, and he remarked aloud as he looked around him:

"I must go through it at once. There may be things here that she must never see. She shall not be tormented by them if I can help it. I can keep a secret—of the dead, or of the living. I don't care what it is!"

The trunk in the corner had been closed, but the key was still in the lock. Dick already had Dr. Montanye's other keys, his purse and pocket book. There was an upright, business-like secretary-table in the room, but all books of account and such matters as a careful man like the

doctor might have in pigeonholes and drawers, were to be left until a future day. Dick went at once to the one strong locker of which the lid had been up when he saw Dr. Montanye lying dead on the floor.

"Just the thing for a fellow to have with him on shipboard," he said of it. "I wouldn't wonder if this chest has been to sea. I'd like to know whom it sailed with, in those long ago days—and when and where it went."

There was a strong fascination in that trunk. It seemed to represent the hidden mystery in the life of Dr. Montanye, which had been so suddenly brought out and presented for investigation. Up came the lid and Dick sat still in front of the open chest during several minutes before he ventured to do more than stare down upon the contents. He paid little attention to the weapons, of several kinds, which lay upon the surface. Among them lay the oil-skin pad of Captain Araga and he had already been informed by his mother of the manner in which Sassago had delivered it. She had said to him:

"Dick, it is just as well that the doctor put it away. I don't like the way you came by it. You don't know what it is."

"No, mother, I kind o' don't care to know."

They were at the Westchester farm house at the time and she replied:

"Perhaps we can set it right, somehow, when we get back to Dr. Montanye's."

He lifted and looked at it now and put it down.

"I won't open it," he said. "I'll put the turquoises with it. I always meant them for Madeline. She can have the other things, too. Mother says so."

His feeling that whatever he had belonged in some way to Madeline was growing upon him rapidly. At all events he was at this hour her next friend and there was a subtle power in the fact that he was sharing so dark a secret with her.

She, in her own room, was stoutly rebelling against that very idea. It was an added bitterness, making her great grief almost unendurable, that any other living being should know of a stain upon the sacred memory of her father. Her thoughts were running wild among the terrible possibilities of his long-ago life.

"As soon as everything is quiet," she said to herself, "I must go in there. I must search that chest before Dick does. I won't leave anything there for him to find. I am the only person that ought to know! Dick has no right!"

He had undertaken his task sooner than she had expected and he was delving deeper into the dangerous coffer. Very soon, he was swiftly but carefully examining papers. Some of these were title deeds of the Montanye estate. It had been purchased piece by piece, until it was now a fair domain, quite sufficient for the support of his daughter. With the productive part of it was also a great deal of wild land and that part of Manhattan Island could never become very valuable property.

"Ship's logbooks," he said, as he pulled out three of them. "I'd have to study them well before I could get anything out of them. Hullo! Here's the doctor's will. Hurrah! This is what I wanted. All right. Everything goes to Madeline. Dr. Fennimore and old Mr. Lenox are executors. There—I will put that out on the table. What's this?"

A mere slip of paper folded into the will had fallen out as he opened it.

"Look behind the bricks in the chimney."

He read it aloud. There was nothing more of it and he went at once to investigate.

"They are all stuck hard on that side of the fireplace," he said. "I'll pull away the wardrobe."

He did so and in a moment more he had also

pulled out the loose bricks. His hand and arm went in to the elbow.

"Bags!" he muttered, and out they came one after another, until a dozen lay upon the floor beside him. Not any were very large.

He untied one and poured out its contents, heavy pieces of shining gold coins.

"There is a great deal of it," he said. Madeline will be rich. She is worth more than all the gold in the world. I never saw her equal anywhere. Is the house all right? I'll see before I go further."

He went and opened the door a few inches to peep out and listen, but all was still, and he returned to his task, carelessly leaving the door unbolted. He was now beginning to count the money, and while doing so he was saying more and more remarkable things about Madeline. He was in the act of untying one of the bags.

"It is too bad," he said. "I am afraid Dr. Montanye may have won some of this stuff altogether too long ago."

"Richard," said a low, agonized voice behind him. "I will never touch it! Put it away! I may be a pirate's daughter—No! I don't believe he ever was one! But I'll never take pirate money! I'd as leave take slave-trade money! It is horrible! Did you find anything else?"

He sprang to his feet and faced her.

"Thank God! O, Madeline!" he exclaimed, in undisguised delight and admiration. "I knew you wouldn't touch it! I wouldn't! You are not a pirate's daughter, though. I've read his papers. I've burned some of them. He was a buccaneer only, by compulsion, for a while. It was long before you were born. It was before he became a good man. Why, Madeline, it was that very thing that killed him. What can you do with all this money? You won't need it. There's his will—"

"I'd die first!" she exclaimed. "He said, to-day, himself, what he meant to do with it. Washington's army must have it. I am so sorry you are a slaver!"

"Why, Madeline, I am not!" he said as roughly and bluntly as ever. "I never will be. If there is any money of that kind coming to me, I'll put it with yours and give it away. You and I can't keep a penny of it. I can earn a living for both of us, if it leaves us poor to lose the whole pile. It's cursed!"

"Dick, dear? she said, pointing down at the morocco case."

"That, too," he replied. "I wouldn't let you wear them for anything. I won't open that oil-

skin pad just now. I won't let mother have it either, till I know more. I'll tell you all I know some other time. We'll sell your turquoises and give away the money."

He felt as she did. His purposes for the future had been taking shape during his long days of conversations with his father. It did her good to hear him speak of them and all the while something more was growing toward maturity in both of them.

There was an overpowering consciousness and with it a mutual acknowledgment that, in all the doubt and trouble they were in, they were thinking and acting together as two who did not expect to be separated. The truth was that the romance of their lives had begun, long ago, without their knowing it. A series of events and experiences had fastened it year by year. It had sailed hither and thither across all seas, with Dick, and it had waited upon the land with Madeline. Nothing under heaven could now have prevented it from taking full possession of them as they stood there, refusing ill-gotten gold, and joining heart and hand, in mutually helpful council.

It was not a time for anything like love-making, however, and Dick put back the bags of gold behind the bricks. Then he closed the trunk and

sent Madeline to her room. No kiss was given, no spoken troth was plighted. A long pressure of hands at the door told all that was necessary.

"I'm glad the Continentals are to get something," said Dick, when he was once more alone. "They need it. It won't go far, though. "Father may keep his doubloons. Mother won't have them. I know she won't."

Then he sat down and was silent, but he seemed to himself to be sailing over beautiful seas, forever and ever and ever, with Madeline Montanye.

CHAPTER XLII.

FREEDOM!

THE funeral of Dr. Montanye was intended to be quiet, simple, but it was attended by an unexpected concourse of all descriptions of the citizens of New York. He had been greatly respected and now the word passed around that he had died from the overstrain of his patriotic services, added to the joy and excitement of the final triumph. The Commander-in-chief sent a mounted guard of honor and several well-known Continental officers attended of their own accord. Madeline had wished for an utter absence of ostentation, but all this did her wounded heart untellable good.

Several days thereafter Captain Mark Wilton and his son Richard stood upon Kruger's wharf, looking at a trim schooner which lay at her moorings.

"She's a beauty!" exclaimed the captain. "She has more stowage than you'd think for, and she's a clipper to go. She makes me want to go to sea, just to look at her."

"Privateer, slaver, pirate," muttered Dick.

"What a log hers would be if it had all been kept from the beginning."

"Enough of it has been kept," said the captain. "You and I have those papers to go through, yet. You can read some of them better than I can. We won't talk of that, now. I don't want to sell her. I'll take the guns out of her and keep her. I guess I'll run her in the West India trade."

"Run her anywhere," said Dick, "but I'm not going to sea again, right away."

"I don't want you to go," laughed his father. "Neither does somebody else. You'll have enough to do settling that estate. It'll be a long day before Madeline'll let you go to sea. It's a pity about that money—"

"No it isn't," interrupted Dick. "Every dollar of it was needed and a hundred times as much more. Some regiments were out of everything—destitute!"

"Why, Dick, I'm with you in that," said the captain, "but you ought to have heard Kruger and the rest. They laughed at me. They're goin' right in. There'll be a regular New York fleet for Africa."

"You'll make more money, cleaner too, at your old place in Beaver Street," replied Dick.

"Madeline and I are not to have much cash, but I can attend to all that in due time. I can support her."

He looked as if he could. So did the broad acres of the Montanye place that morning as Madeline stood in the piazza with Mrs. Wilton and looked across the fields. No tents were now to be seen in any direction. There were no British flags waving over the deserted earthworks on the hills. The long, dark days of the war were gone forever and all things about the peace, which at last had really come, were very beautiful. No other peace like this had ever been won by any people since the world was made, and in it was a promise of good things to come to all the world as well as to America.

The two women were not talking. They did not feel like it. The first words which were spoken came from a remarkable looking person who walked toward them from the gateway. Sassago had shown a tendency toward sprucing up, ever since Evacuation Day. He looked younger and walked straighter, as if some new element of personal pride had been poured into him.

"Ugh!" he said to the women on the piazza. "Old Pequot go hunt. 'Tay away long time. Bring home deer, mebbe."

"Go along," said Madeline. "You'll do about as you please, anyhow. I am going to set you free, Sassago. Richard is having your free papers made out."

Contrary to her expectation, the face of the old Indian instantly darkened.

"Ugh! No!" he exclaimed. "Old Pequot 'tay with Miss Montanye. No go! No want paper. Boy Wilton keep 'em."

"But what will you do?" she asked. "Don't you want to be free? We are all free. I won't own anybody."

"Own Sassago!" he replied, decidedly. "Old Pequot free, now! No send 'em away. Belong on Montanye place. Own old Montanye. He gone. Own Miss Montanye. No want paper, now. Howe gone—lobster gone—lubber all gone. Hunt, fish, 'tay home—no go."

Madeline saw that his feelings were hurt and she went down the steps to shake hands with him.

"Why, Sassago!" she said. "Of course you won't go. That isn't what I mean. But you must be free. Nanny is to be free. You are one of the family. I want you to stay, but I won't own slaves."

"Ugh! Good!" replied Sassago, as if he had

obtained a better understanding of the matter. "Nigger, he slabe. No Pequot—Slabe run away—"

"Nanny won't, den," exclaimed a vigorous voice behind them. "I belong heah, jest as much as dat ole Injin does. I won't go, nuther. Ye can't make me go, papahs or no papahs!"

"You'll stay, Nanny," laughed Madeline. "You shall have your rights as long as you live. So shall Sassago."

"Ugh!" he said as he walked away. "Old Pequot no want paper any more."

He had utter freedom to come and go at all events, and henceforward he was a man of high rank among the few red men left upon Manhattan Island, and among all its other colored citizens. Old white soldiers were plentiful and were hardly distinguished on that account, but Sassago was the only slave, red or white, who had been publicly thanked by General Washington.

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